

OCEAN OF KNOWLEDGE

By

SRI SRI RAVISHANKAR

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1. Dear Guruji, I am going through a tough phase in my life and I am facing problems one after another. I try to solve it spiritually, practically, and astrologically but nothing seems to work. I do regular sadhana, what should I do?

Sri Sri: But still life is going on. Just turn back and see, if you would have not solved any of the problems then how are you existing? My dear, you should just look back and see factually, ask someone else to evaluate. In the last 10 years, you had only problems? Okay, if you have had problems, haven't you solved even a single problem in the last 10 to 15 years?

Then there is no need to solve problems because anyways the problems that came have all gone, and you are still alive, and you are still doing sadhana. That is great thing. That means the problems could not do anything to you. They came and they left, you didn't even have to find a solution to them. Do you see what I'm saying?

Don't generalize it again or don't label it, 'My life is a failure, I am always having problems'. Always having problems? Not possible!

Look at those who have greater problems, look at the problems I have. Do you know how many questions I have to answer per day? Somebody said, 'Guruji, if you had charged even \$10 per question you could have become bigger than Bill Gates'. I would not disagree with that person, perhaps yes.

Do you know how many emails I get? 101,000 emails.

Last month I traveled to so many countries; 12 countries and 18 cities in 1 month. 19 hours a day I am busy. I just arrive from a long trip, immediately there will be 100 questions I will have to answer.

Accept people as they are, and there are many, bipolar, schizophrenic, and all those other types of specimens as well. Have you ever seen me getting annoyed at any one of them, ever?

Just imagine, in this situation to remain sane is a big problem. I heard psychiatrists in their profession end up as patients after a while, because they keep listening to the problem of people.

Michael Fischman was once conducting a course for doctors and their patients and he said, 'Guruji, you know it was very difficult to say who the doctor is and who the patient is'. The group was such.

I don't know how far this is true, but I have heard from several people that often people who are doctors in this field they end up as patients.

There was a survey recently done in AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences), they said that 78% of doctors are sick, they become patients themselves. This is a survey report, astonishing, isn't it?

So, look at those who have more problems than you and you will find your problem is nothing. The world is all problems. Who does not have problems? Jesus had big problems here. The whole Catholicism movement sprung from the problems of Jesus, not by his teachings. It is all focused on suffering, isn't it? Teaching is there of course, but suffering is the main thing. Nativity is not the symbol of Christianity, it is the cross; crucifixion.

Same with Krishna, he also had so many problems till the end. Finally he had to give up. He said to all his very dear ones, 'you all go up North. This city of mine is going to drown'. His own clans were fighting with each other and became so arrogant. Krishna's clan, all his soldiers and all the subjects of his kingdom, they were all so arrogant because they thought they owned Lord Krishna, he is an enlightened being. 'The lord himself is ours and we are from his family. Who can do anything to us?' They went with such arrogance and they fought with each other, destroyed everybody and got destroyed.

That is why I say don't look for any perfection here, this world is imperfect. Whatever perfection you can bring in the world, bring it, and then wash your hands and enjoy yourself. Definitely do whatever you can. That doesn't mean you leave some things imperfect, no! You are here to bring whatever perfection level you can, and that much merit you gain. As much as you walk, that many skills will blossom in your own life and that much happier you will be. So if you don't do anything you will be unhappy. So do things, which you are supposed to do, and you become free.

2. Five types of restlessness.

The first type of restlessness is due to the place you are in. When you move away from that place, the street or the house, you immediately feel better. Chanting, singing, children playing and laughing can change this atmospheric restlessness. If you chant and sing, the vibration in the place changes.

The second type of restlessness is in the body. Eating the wrong food or vata aggravating food, eating at odd times, not exercising, and overworking can all cause a physical restlessness. The remedy for this is exercise, moderation in work habits and going on a vegetable or juice diet for one or two days.

The third type of restlessness is mental restlessness. It is caused by ambition, strong thoughts, likes or dislikes. Knowledge alone can cure this restlessness. Seeing life from a broader perspective, knowledge about the Self and the impermanence of everything. If you achieve everything, so what? After your achievement, you will die. Knowledge of your death or life, confidence in the Self, in the Divine, can all calm down the mental

restlessness.

The fourth type is emotional restlessness. Any amount of knowledge does not help here. Only Kriya helps! All that emotional restlessness vanishes. Also the presence of the Guru, a wise person, or a saint will help to calm your emotional restlessness.

The fifth type of restlessness is rare. It is the restlessness of the soul. When everything feels empty and meaningless, know you are very fortunate. That longing and restlessness is the restlessness of the soul. Do not try to get rid of it. Embrace it! Welcome it! Usually to get rid of it people do all sorts of things - they change places, jobs or partners, do this, do that. It seems to help for some time, but it does not last.

This restlessness of the soul alone can bring authentic prayer in you. It brings perfection, Siddhis and miracles in life. It is so precious to get that inner most longing for the Divine. Satsang, the presence of the enlightened one, soothes the restlessness of the soul.

3. Guruji is it true you have some super power? You have stopped rain so many times just looking at sky, you can read thoughts.

Sri Sri: You know love is the most super power in this world and that power is with everybody, not only with me. When mind is free from lust, greed, possessiveness, arrogance etc., when the mind is in the pure form with which we were all born with, then nature listens to you. You are a child of nature and nature loves you, when that manifests, when you are clear then two things happen - your wishes get fulfilled and you can fulfill others' wishes also. When you are content that is when blessing happens, don't think only Guruji can do it. This is no achievement and no effort is required. That is natural from our state of being that state of innocence. Most of us have lost it but I still haven't lost it.

4. Faith is giving the Divine a chance to act.
5. Give a chance for miracles to happen. When is all this possible? It can happen when you are hollow and empty. When both, your heart and mind are pure and clear, then positive energy rises in you. But if your mind is full of negativity, and if you are stressed out; or if you are complaining about this and that, and grumbling and griping, then no miracle is possible. Even regular work, which has to happen, does not happen. Simple things do not happen because energy is low and negative. When energy is high, what you think is impossible starts happening.

6. Guruji, I know two people who went to the temples near Madurai for palm leaf reading. I know them personally and they don't do any sadhana (spiritual practices) in their lives and they are not even spiritual. They have been told that this is their last birth. Compared to them, I see myself as someone who does sadhana, but still I am struggling with so many impressions and weaknesses. Is it possible that even a person who is having his last birth can be leading a life without any sadhana?

Sri Sri: First of all, don't compare yourself with them, okay? Sometimes, many of these readings are not 100% perfect. They make predictions, which are about 60 to 70% true. So you should always leave a margin. Sometimes to enthuse the devotees, they say, 'this is your last life; you better do sadhana.

There is a way to say it. The elderly people used this way to say, 'Come on, this is your last chance. You better do your sadhana'. In that way also it can be said, but you should not compare, okay?

Another thing is you never know when someone will start their sadhana or how much they have done in their past. So life is huge; it is eternal. The best is to look at yourself and see how much you have grown. Haven't you grown? You have grown a lot. Watch your own growth and you feel more confident to move forward. Don't worry you will have a last birth too and if we have to come, we will come back again, so what? When you go with knowledge, you come back with knowledge. When you go with misery, you will come back with misery. That is the thing.

7. Ego is that which destroys love. You can overcome ego by being natural, just like how you are right now.
8. Guruji, It has been said that this world is not real but an illusion of the mind. With this perspective, how do we view Lord Krishna and his teachings in the Bhagavad Gita? Were they also an illusion?

Sri Sri: Is this question real or an illusion, first tell me? If the question is real, answer will be real. If the question is an illusion then everything is an illusion. Your spirit of enquiry is also an illusion, then why should an answer be given for it. Got it?

There are two dimensions. I keep saying all the time. One is the quantum dimension. In atomic level, everything is the same. In the quantum mechanics, everything are just atoms, the floor, the chair, the door, the window – it is all made up of just one matter, one substance and on the classical level, these are all different. The chair is different from the door. You cannot go and sit on the door or use the chair for the door. So they are all different.

In chemistry, the periodic table is there which speaks of the different elements. Then there is quantum physics, which speak of all being just a wave function. So both are essential and both are true. Got it? This is Dvaita and that is Advaita, and Bhagavad Gita connects to both. It takes you to Advaita and connects you to Dvaita – the duality as well as makes you understand the ultimate. Both!

9. People with contentment usually do not act. It is easy to act out of frustration. The real skill is to be contented and still act.
10. This universe is already a heaven. What blocks us from perceiving it as heaven is our own mind.
11. Just believe in God, know that He is there and He will take care of everything for you.
12. The sign of true love is that it can't be expressed fully nor can it be hidden. Love is beyond words, it is the language of the eyes.
13. I wish the best for you and I would like for you to choose. It is not that I decide for you. I want you to choose because with every choice you make you grow.
14. Attachment means having a limited vision. A mother gets so attached to her child that her vision for the child becomes very limited. This is the difference between love and attachment. Attachment only gives pain. It promises happiness but in reality does not give any happiness. Having a desire for happiness but experiencing misery is what attachment is.
15. Certain rough times come in life, just have patience. Don't be in hurry to take decision. At time of dire confusion and conflict you should have some patience.
16. Just know this that there is a power and know that miracles happen. Give some space for miracles to happen.
17. If opposite values are complementary, then am I good, bad, or am I both?

Sri Sri: Why do you put a label of 'good' or 'bad' on yourself? Remove it off and be natural,

be at peace. When we assume a negative quality as our own, we feel guilty, and when we assume a positive quality as our own, then we become proud. Both of these are signs of being mentally unhealthy. Surrender both the negative and positive qualities to the Divine. A person who is surrendered will be good.

Surrender brings focus and character in life. Without the development of these two, life is directionless. Even a little bit of sacrifice helps an individual to blossom. Without sacrifice, the glow does not come up. Sacrifice does not lead to a long, sorrowful face. Renunciates are joyful, whereas the karma (one filled with desires) feels burdened and sad.

18. Guruji, how to prepare for death?

Sri Sri: There is no need to prepare for death. You die for the past, when you let the past die then you are living for the present. Art of living, Art of dying are two sides of the same coin. You should die for all the past things that have happened. Live in the present! If you have to live in the present you have to discard all the past (clapping).

Every second, discard the past. If you know the art of dying every second of life then life blossoms in its highest state. Mind dying each moment is death. Anyway there is no end to soul. What you think of as death is only separation of body and mind. Our body changes, mind changes, intellect changes, everything changes. That which doesn't change, the very core inside us – the indestructible, if you can connect to that, that unchanging aspect in you, then that makes life fun!

19. We have heard that Navratri is the triumph of Sattva over Rajas and Tamas. But are not all the three Gunas equally important for life to exist? How can we favour one over the other?

Sri Sri: No, it is always like that. One of the three will dominate. Sattva is always there in everybody, and so are Rajas and Tamas. All the three Gunas always exist together. But what dominates is what makes the difference. If Tamo guna dominates, there is misery.

When Rajoguna dominates, there are conflicts. When Satguna dominates, there is awareness, knowledge and happiness. You should observe which is dominating, since that is what gives quality to that time.

20. Let time celebrate your presence, you keep smiling as ever.

21. Getting rid of people and things is not the answer, but dealing with them with skill is the answer and silence is the mother of all skills - silencing this chattering mind with a few minutes of deep meditation. Then you will see that everything changes.

22. Look at the noise in your mind. What is it about? Money? Fame? Recognition? Fulfillment? Relationships? The noise is about something; silence is about nothing. Silence is the basis; noise is the surface.

23. "When you know and trust the process of creation, you will simply rejoice!"

24. Many thoughts come and go in the mind. You would be surprised at the kind of thoughts that come to your mind. You become so nervous due to some thoughts of your mind, but you should know that thoughts come and go. So it does not carry any meaning. We are far greater than our thoughts. So just know this and relax.

25. Always remember this: Nature will never confront you with a problem you cannot solve. You already have the answer; that is why the question appears in front of you.

26. What is the difference between yoga and Sudarshan Kriya?

Sri Sri: Unfortunately, yoga is considered as just the physical exercises. It is just a beginning; physical exercise is just one part of it. But, then comes the breath and the mind. Tapping the inner source of energy is important. Yoga is never complete without meditation. Sudarshan Kriya takes you to the deepest meditation where body, mind and breath comes in the rhythm connecting to the source of life deep within.

27. Gurudev, in the yagnas, the Rishis were invoked. What is the exact process? How come the people who existed so long ago still exist today?

Sri Sri: You know consciousness never dies; the mind never dies! Nothing ever dies! It only changes form. Matter can neither be created nor destroyed. So is the same with energy.

In the consciousness, the Rishi energies are present.

It is like, you have all moods within you, and when you are acting in a movie or in a play, you create those moods. An actor creates different moods at different times. He shows anger; he shows fierceness, valor, or fear. So we can manifest all these emotions; we can act them out at any time.

The mind expresses its moods, though all the moods are within itself. At will it can express any of it at anytime. In the same way, in the higher consciousness, there are different impulses which indicate different abilities and qualities of consciousness and they can be manifested by invoking.

28. Strength and Subordination

Many people do not want to work under someone else, be it in their profession, in any company or even voluntary service. The general notion is that when you work under someone, you lose your freedom, you have to be answerable. So, many people opt for business, wanting to be their own boss. But, in business, you are accountable to so many people. If you cannot be accountable to even one person, how can you be accountable to many? This is the paradox. In fact, being in business binds you more than the boss! Refusing to work under someone is a sign of weakness, not strength.

A strong person would not feel uncomfortable working under anyone, because he knows his strength. It is the weak and poor in spirit who do not like to work under someone else, because they are unaware of their strength. They can be neither successful in business nor in any profession.

And the same is true even in the field of social service - often volunteers do not want to work under someone else. This is merely an exhibition of their weakness. With such an attitude, they achieve very little. One who is timid and weak in spirit would be uncomfortable to work even under the Wise one; but one who knows his own strength can work effectively even under a fool!

Nityanand: But to work under a fool is frustrating!

Sri Sri: When you know your strength, with skill and intelligence, you can turn every disadvantage into an advantage. A fool can bring out the best of your communication skills! (Laughter) so watch out! If you feel uncomfortable working under someone, it clearly shows you need to strengthen yourself. Desiring freedom from circumstances, situations or people are no freedom at all. Knowing that nobody can take away your freedom that is strength! And when you realize your strength is unshakable, you would not mind working under anybody.

29. Guruji, is sexual energy and meditative energy the same energy?

Sri Sri: Yes, it is only one energy in the body, but it manifests in different forms, in different chakras. Sexual energy, love energy, intellectual energy, sharpness, awareness, anger; all these are related. You would have heard about the seven chakras (energy centers); it is One Energy that manifests itself in various forms.

In the first chakra (Muladhara), at the base of the spine, the energy manifests as enthusiasm or inertia. When the same life force energy comes to the second chakra (Swadhisthana), it manifests as sexual energy or creative or procreative energy. The same energy goes up to the navel region, the third chakra (Manipura), and manifests in four different forms, which relate to four different emotions - greed, jealousy, generosity and

joy.

That is why all these four emotions are depicted through the tummy. Jealousy is an emotion that one feels in the stomach. Generosity is depicted with a large tummy, e.g. Santa Claus. Joy is also depicted with a big tummy, e.g., Lord Ganesha and the Laughing Buddha.

When the same energy comes to the fourth chakra (Anahata), the heart chakra; manifests as three different emotions, which are love, hatred and fear. When this energy rises to the fifth chakra (Vishuddha), at the level of the throat, it symbolizes grief and gratefulness. When you feel grief, the throat chokes, and when you feel grateful also, the throat chokes. The same energy then goes in between the eyebrows to the sixth chakra (Ajna), and manifests as anger and alertness. Anger, alertness, knowledge, and wisdom are all related to the third eye centre. The same energy goes to the seventh chakra (Sahasrara), at the top of the head and manifests as sheer bliss.

That is why in any sanctuary experiences, when you feel total bliss; the mind immediately goes to the top of the head. Something shoots up to the top of the head and you feel blissful. So, the upward movement and downward movements of energy are all the emotions in life.

30. Creativity brings a new beginning for "time". When you are creative, you break the monotony of time. Everything becomes fresh and alive. Creativity brings along with it a new round of enthusiasm. Both creative and procreative impulses in nature are associated with enthusiasm. When you are enthusiastic you are closer to the creative principle of existence.

Deep silence is the mother of creativity. No creativity can come out of one who is too busy, worried, over-ambitious or lethargic. Balanced activity, rest and yoga can kindle skills and creativity in you.

31. Guruji, can you please talk a little more about the sound/alphabet meditation?

Sri Sri: That is one form of meditation that we do here, where you can't go to Ka without Aa. So, you go to the very source where the sound arose, right? What happened at that time? Stillness! The mind became totally still at that moment. When we went to the source from where thought comes, 25 minutes passes in no time. When you know all this, you can go deep inside. These things are not found in any books; it has to come from experience, which is very important.

There is a beautiful ancient saying by a rishi (seer) about how sound is generated; atma budhya samethyukta. When the soul connects with the intellect, and conjoins with the mind, then heat or energy is produced in the body. This energy moves the air through the

voice box, and slowly, sound gets generated. To understand how this mechanism works requires a lot of introspection, and stillness, to go to the source of the sound, to find out how it is generated. It is fascinating.

There was a yogi who lived to the age of 103 or 104, and passed away about seven or eight years ago. He was given the title of Nada Brahman, because he could make a sound from any part of his body. Even, I visited him once. He could make particular sounds from different parts of his body.

He also went to USA, and the scientists were so amazed, they put electrodes and did a lot of experiments on him. He lived in Rishikesh, in the Himalayas, and practiced this for a very long time. He had a hefty, muscular body, and could make sounds like Ka, Cha, Pa from different parts of the body. It was interesting.

He was a very nice gentleman, but I don't think he taught this knowledge to anybody; it left with him.

This world is full of wonders. At one point, when I was about 22 or 25, I thought maybe I should learn this from him, but then I had many other things to do.

Knowledge is endless on this planet, especially mystic knowledge.

I was invited to CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Geneva. The scientists there received me, and showed me the God particle, and how they found it.

One of the senior scientists there said that he had been working on matter for the last 40 years, only to find that it doesn't exist. He had been working on sub-atomic particles, neutrons, electrons, protons, etc., only to realize that they simply don't exist! This is very akin to what the ancient philosophers used to say, i.e., all this is nothing. Everything is nothing and nothing is everything. All that you see as form is nothing, and what you see as nothing, is what is making everything.

It is a beautiful thing when science and spirituality realize that they are not different. Those who think they are different are fools; they are living a hundred years back, but in today's age, they are the same thing.

I spoke to the scientists about the three types of space:

- Chittakasha, the intermediate space or inner space, where all thoughts and emotions float.
- Chidakasha, the space of pure consciousness or energy, which here and there appears to have consolidated and appears to be matter.
- Bhootakasha, the outer space, in which we see all the matter that exists.

What appears to be matter is really not matter, it is all one energy, and that one field is called Brahman, and that is what everybody is, that is what everything is.

The scientists were so intrigued. It is so beautiful that this knowledge is available to us in this generation. It is as good as having a laptop. Just imagine, a few generations back, there was no Google. If you had to learn something, you had to go to a library and look through the Index and the pages. It would take two hours to search in the index in a library. Today, at the press of a button, you can get anything in the world on your laptop. It is such a fortunate thing for this generation that all the knowledge in the world is available in no time. You don't have to order books from across continents and wait for months to receive it.

32. Guruji, even after being born as a human being who is the highest among all the species on this planet, why do we desire freedom? Is there anything more beautiful than this?

Sri Sri: See wanting happiness is natural, everyone wants happiness but happiness does not come alone. Happiness brings along his twin sorrow also with him but no one likes sorrow and everyone wants freedom from sorrow. Freedom one wants from what? Sorrow and to want freedom from sorrow also is natural. Just as much as wanting happiness is natural, in the same way wanting freedom from sorrow is also natural. Okay, now the faster one realizes that happiness is there but sorrow is also there then the desire for freedom becomes stronger.

The one who does not wish for happiness receives freedom and the one who does not even wish for freedom is the one who receives devotion. One who does not crave for happiness is already free but if one craves for happiness then one will also crave for freedom. When happiness does not please you then you have achieved freedom but when freedom also does not please you then you receive devotion! Devotion brings so much happiness and pleasure to you.

33. Sometimes even after Sadhana the chatter in my mind doesn't stop. How do I stop the chatter?

Sri Sri: Dispassion is the only way to make it stop. Know everything is a dream. Worries and wants are responsible for chatter. Drop the worries and drop the wants. That is what is called dispassion.

34. Gurudev, you say that two questions will be asked in the end, how much love we gave, and how much knowledge we took? I have always taken love and given knowledge. What will be my fate now?

Sri Sri: At least you have understood this much!

All this time you have enjoyed giving knowledge, now start taking knowledge and giving love. How much ever love you have received, give more than that to other, and you are done. The car has taken a 'U' turn then. It was going in the wrong direction; the driver realized his fault and changed the direction. Does it mean that we stop sharing knowledge? No, there is no need to stop. Continue giving knowledge. Whatever you receive, you give that and give that knowledge with love. Don't give it to inflate your ego. That person needs this knowledge, share knowledge with this intention.

35. I am not able to keep any commitments. How to keep commitments?

Sri Sri: If you have accepted that you cannot keep any commitment, then you have refused to improve, because you are seeking pleasure and too comfortable. Commitment puts you on track and eventually brings pleasure. If you cannot keep commitment, that much misery you will face. Be prepared for it. If you do not want misery, you have to honor some commitments. It is not possible to honor every single commitment.

That is where Lord Krishna's example is the best. He said I will not lift a weapon in war. Then in the war he saw that Bheeshma is not listening, he took his Sudarshan Chakra. It is good to break a commitment for a greater cause. If you have made a foolish commitment, when you become intelligent you should let go your foolish commitment.

36. Sri Sri in satsang today

If you want to get back to your innocence, just go look at a little flower. Be with nature.

Death is like travelling in a sleeper coach. Many times you sleep off and go from place to place. In the same way. It is like a long sleep.

37. Guruji, how can we keep a smile in front of all despite all the difficult challenges in life?

Sri Sri: When you feel like that, give it to me. I am with you.

Whenever you feel a challenge, remember me. Give me your challenges and know that you are not alone. You will sail through those difficulties that I guarantee you. Alone you may feel it is difficult.

Everyone smiles when everything is okay. The real achievement is your ability to smile when things go wrong. When everything falls apart and you still smile, then you are an Art of living member. You are well soaked in knowledge.

Whatever has happened in the past, just shrugs it off and move ahead. When you dust away all the dirt (of the past) that has accumulated inside you, then you will simply start shining. You become much stronger, your consciousness blossoms, and happiness starts to flow. Then you can say that you are alive. This is what life really is.

Forgiving someone shows one's compassion. Asking for forgiveness shows that you recognize your mistakes, and that you resolve not to repeat them in the future. Now to say, 'Only if he/she asks me for forgiveness will I forgive them', this is of a lower form of forgiveness. The highest form of forgiveness is to realize that the other committed a mistake out to ignorance, and having a sense of compassion for them. Forgiving others with a sense of compassion is the best for of forgiveness.

Cultivating this sense of forgiveness in oneself is a mark of being noble in character.

38. Judgements

Though you have heard "Don't judge", judgement comes unavoidably in day-to-day life. By the actions and behaviour of people, you either approve or disapprove. But always remember that everything is changing, do not hold on to the judgement. Otherwise your judgement gets solidified like a rock. It brings misery for you and for others.

If judgements are lighter, like air, like a breeze, they bring in fragrance, and then move away, or they could bring a foul smell, and then move away. But they should not stay forever.

Judgements are so subtle that you are not even aware of their existence. Only when you are full of love and compassion, you can ever be free from all judgements.

Yet the world cannot move without judgements. Until you judge something as good or bad, you cannot do any action. You want to buy only good apples in the market. If someone lies to you ten times, the next time he speaks it could also be a lie - a judgement happens automatically.

See the possibility that people and things can change at any time and don't hold on to judgements.

We want to see everything perfect in others but we forget to look at ourselves. We do not reflect on ourselves. Reflect on yourself but then don't get too entangled into the analysis. Do not overdo it. You have some good qualities and some not so good qualities, it is okay.

Just keep moving ahead. Some things are fine, some are not, and it does not matter. You should simply keep moving forward.

39. Welcoming and Resisting

Do you welcome all that comes to you or do you resist it? If you cannot resist anything, you cannot welcome anything! You cannot resist everything and you cannot welcome everything! You don't welcome all thoughts that come to your mind. When you welcome a thought, it means you find it good and act on it. If you act on all thoughts that come to your mind, you will end up in a mental hospital or in prison. So, you resist or ignore some thoughts and welcome other thoughts. You need discrimination in life. Welcoming and resisting is a swing in life. Welcoming is essential for expansion and growth, and resistance is essential for maintenance.

Audience: But what you resist it's persists!

Gurujī: If you resist a cold it does not persist! If there is no resistance in your body you cannot survive. Your body resists something and welcomes something.

Where the resistance is weak, the persistence happens. A weak resistance makes the opposition persist. A strong resistance erases the opposition. Strong resistance leads to valor, power and samadhi (equanimity). It brings in you the strength of a warrior. Nothing can tempt you, nothing can obstruct you. Then the victory is gained without fighting. Where there is strong resistance or total welcome, the victory is gained without any fighting.

"If you are happy, go and do seva (service). We have lots of things to do. Care for others, do some service. There is so much to learn. Learn more. Don't run behind joy. Let joy run behind you. If you follow joy, misery will follow. If you follow wisdom, fun and joy follow. Wherever you go, fun tags behind you".

Anxiety about the outcome of your action is what pulls you down. But when we perform some actions as an expression of joy and do not bother about the result, the action itself brings fulfillment.

40. How to attain mukti (liberation) while living in a household?

Sri Sri: When while living in a household, the desire for liberation arises, right? If the desire is there then liberation is not very far. Usually when we are tired of something we wish to be free from it. When you are filled with Divine love, then there is no desire for liberation nor sadness due to bondage.

41. A lady - I want an honest and humble man in my life.

Sri Sri - I am neither honest nor humble. (Everyone shocked). I cannot tell everyone I am God, as not everyone will understand. So I am not honest. I am not humble - how can God be humble! If I am humble I am not honest. If I'm honest I cannot be humble! (Laughter)

42. Reason and Faith

Faith is beyond reason, yet you need to have faith in your own reasoning! Faith and reason cannot exist without each other. Every reason is based on some faith. Whenever reason or faith break, confusion and chaos prevail which is often a step for growth.

There are two types of faith: faith out of fear, greed and insecurity; and faith born out of love like the faith between the mother and child, the master and disciple. Whereas faith out of love cannot be broken, faith out of fear and greed is shaky.

An atheist bases himself on reason and a believer on faith. A believer uses God as an insurance policy; he thinks he is special. In the eyes of God there is no "mine" and "others" - all are the same. An atheist rationalizes to keep his eyes shut to reality. Death shakes them both. When someone close dies, an atheist's eyes are opened and a believer's faith cracks. Only a Yogi - a wise one - remains unshaken, for that person has transcended both reason and faith.

You need a balance between faith and reason.

- Reason and faith are completely opposite, yet they are an integral part of life.
- Reason is reeling in the known. Faith is moving in the unknown.
- Reason is repetition. Faith is exploration.
- Reason is routine. Faith is adventure.

While reasoning keeps you sane and grounded, miracles cannot happen without faith. Faith takes you beyond limitations.

43. There is no need to go to on long pilgrimages to find the Divine. If you don't find God here, where you are, then it is not possible anywhere else. Where the mind dissolves, Shiva is there. The Divine is all around you and is seeing you. He doesn't have a form. He is the formless core of existence and the goal. He is the seer, sight and the scene. This formless Divinity is Shiva. Be established wherever you are. The moment you are established, centered, you see that there is Divinity present everywhere.

44. Work never gets done by worrying about it. It gets done by intelligent thinking and clever action.

45. When you are considering yourself a Saadhak, don't compare yourself with anyone. Consider yourself incomparable. Everyone should consider themselves as incomparable. When we compare ourselves with others we start looking outwards, and then we get tangled in cravings and aversions and lose ourselves in the mess.

46. Dispassion

See, our senses are naturally outgoing. The natural tendency, when you wake up from sleep is, the eyes want to see, the ears want to hear, the nose wants to smell, the skin wants to touch, and the tongue wants to taste. So, the natural tendency of the senses is to go outwards, and enjoy the whole creation. But the ability of the senses to enjoy is limited.

Today we went to the park and the scenery was beautiful, but for how long are you going to watch the beautiful scenery? The desire to enjoy through the senses first comes in the mind, but the capacity of the senses to enjoy is limited.

Suppose you love pudding, or apple-pie; how much can you eat? One piece, two pieces, three servings? By the time you have the third serving, the same thing that was giving you pleasure, becomes painful. This is because our ability to enjoy is limited to our senses.

Often one finds this imbalance – of the mind wanting more but the senses not having the capacity to enjoy.

There can be three situations:

1. Things are not available; the mind wants to have food but it is not available.
2. Food is available but there is no desire in the mind to enjoy it.
3. There is desire in the mind, food is also available, but the senses are not capable of enjoying it. Do you see these three situations?

A gentleman came to me and said, 'Gurudev, I am 50 years old and I am looking for a relationship, but I am not finding the right person'. I said, 'Wait, and look for another 20 years!'

If you are so choosy about it, and keep looking for something, then when you get it also, you don't enjoy it. Why? This is because your mind is not there. There is an imbalance between the things that are available, the attitude in the mind, and the ability of the senses; all these have to match. Only then are you able to enjoy anything in the planet.

What big joy can you ever keep? Have you observed after laughing a lot and being very excited, that excitement cannot be held in your mind? It feels awful. You want to throw off the excitement and just be quite for a while. Have you had this experience?

Wisdom dawns the day you recognize that joy is painful. Your dispassion begins on that day when you notice joy is disturbing, exciting. You want to be a little quiet and calm. We have lost that sensitivity. That is why there is so much craving for joy, for something bigger. Something must be better for me, something must give me more happiness.

This is feverishness. We move from one feverishness to another feverishness. The pain of joy is feverishness. So you move from this feverishness to that feverishness and from that feverishness to this feverishness. It is a constant struggle.

The feverishness in the mind, the availability of the goods, and the strength of the senses, they all often don't match.

When you're in the grip of feverishness about the result of your actions, what do you do?

1. Have faith and confidence that the result will be much better than you can ever imagine. With faith you can get rid of feverishness of action/achievement. Feverishness can also be a hangover from overactivity. Then sleep, listening to flute music, cold water baths, etc. can help.

2. Have Dispassion and know the whole thing will be over one way or the other, and it doesn't matter. Meditation and breathing can calm you down. Drop whatever you are doing and do something completely irrelevant, e.g. while decorating your house, take a moment off to cut grass, or go shopping! When you are doing something very important, take a moment off to do something totally irrelevant and insignificant. This enhances your creativity.

Relevant action keeps you bound to the action. Irrelevant action makes life a game!

Now suppose everything is available. You are hungry, you want to have food, and you can enjoy it, but even that is momentary. It stays for a few moments and then again, you are back to square one. This is how things are! And what does it cause? Frustration!

A desire fulfilled causes frustration; a desire unfulfilled also causes frustration. What do we need to do? What is the answer?

The answer is to look inside. Go to the source of happiness, from where joy comes. When you go to the source of happiness, the senses are strengthened, contentment comes to the mind, and things become available the way you want them. All three happen when the senses are turned inwards, and that inward turning of senses is called dispassion. Desirelessness, Dispassion, and Samadhi are the deepest rest.

We need three things in life, Dispassion, Passion and Compassion.

Often, we think dispassion is being so dull, boring, and uninteresting; that is how these so-called dispassionate people are, lifeless. No, that is not dispassion. To me, dispassion is that which is full of life, full of enthusiasm.

What is enthusiasm? Enthusiasm means to be connected to God within. When you are with your source, you can only be enthusiastic. Apathy is when you are away from the source of life. You cannot be but enthusiastic when your mind is totally in the present moment.

There is an old saying in Sanskrit, 'What pleasure, what joy is there that dispassion will not bring to you?' This means that dispassion will bring to you all the joy that you would ever want in life.

You need passion. Passion and dispassion are complementary like the in-breath and out-breath and in between is compassion. You breathe in but you cannot hold the breath too long; you have to breathe out. Similarly, you need to have passion to make things work but also the dispassion to let go.

If you have only passion, you get burnt out and frustrated. People who have too much passion, they do things and get burnt out. Do you know why? It is because they are holding onto it. They put their heart and soul into it. They put so much strain, and still they don't get anything in their hands. That is a sorry state of affairs.

This can change with dispassion, and that is why dispassion will make a big difference. So, passion when you work, dispassion when you turn inward and compassion all the time, is the key.

Passion is a sense of lack of abundance and whenever everything is abundance, dispassion happens and when dispassion is there, everything comes in abundance. When you don't crave for abundance, it comes to you.

Dispassion or vairagya is one of pillars of the highest knowledge. Often, we think of dispassion as being totally unenthusiastic or not interested in anything. This is not dispassion. You should know that dispassion is not apathy. It is simply a broader perspective of reality.

Dispassion is moving towards the source. Dispassion simply means the way back home. It is the journey towards the source, which is a reservoir of enthusiasm. When dispassion and enthusiasm co-exist, that is the secret of perennial enthusiasm and profound dispassion. Though they appear to be opposite, they are actually complementary.

Dispassion is lack of feverishness. Dispassion does not take joy away from you. Dispassion gives you joy that nothing else can give you. There is a verse in Shankaracharya's

composition Bhaja Govindam, "Kasya sukham na karoti viragaha?" which means "What pleasure cannot be given by dispassion? It gives all the pleasures, because you are so totally in the moment".

Dispassion does not divide you. In fact, it connects you to the present moment. The term 'dispassion' can be misunderstood. People who are melancholic think that they are being dispassionate. They run away from the world and say that they have renounced it. That is not renunciation.

Dispassion is something more precious, refined and more valuable in life. There are several types of dispassion.

The first type of dispassion is when you are dispassionate because you realise the misery in the world. The events in life — the pain, the suffering one experiences or sees — brings dispassion.

The second type of dispassion is born out of the desire to reach something higher. Some consider dispassion as a path to enlightenment. If you renounce something here you gain something out there. Those who are seeking enlightenment practice austerities and take vows for a better place in heaven.

The third type of dispassion comes out of wisdom or knowledge.

A broader understanding of the transient nature of things brings a state of non-attachment to any events, objects, people or situations, that lets you remain calm and unperturbed. The more dispassionate you are, the more the power of Sankalpa comes to you.

Dispassion is the strength in you. When you are centred and calm, you can understand that everyone who has come to this world has come to give something to this world. We have nothing to take from here.

Dispassion is that delicate balance that is beyond both joy and sorrow. In dispassion, any great joy can come up and it will not shake you. That is enlightenment. Even if you are offered the heavens, you won't move an inch from your seat. That is attainment. Dispassion is the secret. You can learn techniques and you can learn to meditate.

Dispassion is not a happening;

I would say dispassion is what you invoke in yourself. When you widen your awareness, when you see everything is going to disappear and death is imminent, we are all going to die and everything is changing; when this knowledge comes - then dispassion is spontaneous.

You need to understand and see life from a broader perspective and then automatically

dispassion comes within you; but there is some effort. A little effort from you and then it will happen.

You can learn many things, but dispassion you cannot learn. It can only blossom in your life in time or with the presence of your teacher, your master. There is no other way dispassion can blossom. You cannot get it in books. Only experience will teach you.

The highest wisdom that can ever be achieved on this planet is dispassion.

You know when you broaden your vision, dispassion is there, and it comes naturally. It is not something that you force yourself to practice and say, 'I am going to be dispassionate'. The mind says, 'you want to do this' and you say, 'No, I need to be dispassionate'. It is not an intellectual exercise but a phenomenon.

Dispassion happens when knowledge expands, awareness expands and when you are more alert. The state that comes in you is dispassion. You can be anywhere and be dispassionate. Dispassion is welcoming everything.

Anything can be shaken, but not dispassion. Anything can be bought, but not dispassion. If you are dispassionate, if you are centered, nothing whatsoever can shake you. Centeredness brings energy, a spark. Enjoyment of bliss brings inertia. If you are dispassionate, the bliss is still there. When the freezer is full of ice cream you do not bother about it.

Dispassion takes away the sense of scarcity. The only rich one is the one who is dispassionate. Otherwise you can be tempted, you can be shaken. If someone offers you two million dollars and tells you? Do this, do that? You will move from your position. But that person can't move one who is dispassionate.

Hide your dispassion and express your love. By expressing dispassion you lose enthusiasm in life and by not expressing love you feel stifled. Expressing dispassion may bring ego. Hide dispassion in your heart like the roots of a tree and express love like a ripe fruit.

If you run after glory all you get is misery. When you are dispassionate, glory comes to you. True dispassion is glorious! Real glory is true dispassion.

Divine love does not let the dispassion manifest. The attainment of love brings such bliss and such intoxication; it not only takes away your passion, but dispassion as well.

47. You say when we are scared of something, we should face our fears. My question is where do I get the courage to face these fears?

Sri Sri: Know that you are not alone, and there is a universal power that loves you, and is

with you. When you remember that you are being loved very dearly, fear vanishes. All your troubles begin because you don't believe you are being loved very dearly. That is where the whole problem starts, and you start behaving in ways that pushes everybody away. You create a misery for yourself, because you doubt yourself; Am I good enough? Am I being loved? Does God love me or not? Do people love me or not? These sorts of doubts.

Just take it for granted that you are loved and liked, even if you're a buffoon. Even if you are a clown, you are loved and enjoyed. People like you however you are. Just move on, don't sit and spend too much time worrying about yourself, examining yourself, and re-examining. Just take up a commitment and do what you need to do, and take deep rest with dispassion. Three things are essential, Passion, Dispassion and Compassion.

When you have passion, you don't worry. When you don't have passion that is when you sit and worry. Hesitation comes when you lack passion. Without passion life loses all its charm and you slip into depression. Passion is essential; invoke the passion. Not only passion, dispassion is also essential. People tell you that you should be passionate, but I say you should also have dispassion. Dispassion is often thought to be a depressed state of affairs. People look very depressed and think this is dispassion. This is a completely wrong understanding.

Dispassion makes you centered. It keeps your smile and equanimity. It keeps the intellect sane and emotions balanced. When you have dispassion you will stop complaining about anything to anybody. The world is the way it is, you won't complain about people or situations, and you won't complain about yourself. This is dispassion. Many times we complain about others, including the ones we love the most. We make the other person defensive, or make them give explanations. It is such a headache!

Initially I used to get swayed by this. People would say, 'You don't look at me', or 'You don't talk to me', or 'Are you angry with me', my goodness! These days I do not answer such questions. If you think so, let it be. So be it. Never mind! When you get beaten up a little bit by your own emotions that makes you strong somewhere. It's all just a matter of wanting attention. You give attention and they are alright.

Just like babies – if you don't attend to them they throw tantrums just to draw your attention. Have you noticed this? When you have guests at home and you are busy talking to them that is when the children want to show you their paintings. They have already shown it to you ten times. But when you are having an important discussion, they come and disturb you! You wonder that this child was quiet, what happened all of a sudden!

We have not grown up from that stage; we always want attention from people and for this attention we create tension for the others.

So with dispassion, you neither have attention deficiency, nor do you have any tension. You won't sit and crave for attention. Dispassion is essential. One more thing that is really

beneficial is compassion. When you have compassion it propels you, it motivates you. When you have compassion for those who do wrong, you don't feel hatred or bitterness towards them. Compassion greases passion and dispassion, and balances them out.

48. Where Dispassion is Detrimental! Is there something we should not be dispassionate about?

Sri Sri: Myself! (Laughter) Do not put off the fire of longing for the Divine or Satsang with Dispassion. There is a little fire in you that propel you towards Knowledge, Sadhana, Devotion and Service. Sometimes you use Knowledge to put off that fire. The so-called dispassionate people are often morose and unenthusiastic. Many a times you hear people saying. "Oh, never mind, God is everywhere, Guruji is in my heart, and you can do satsang anywhere. My Seva is my Sadhana, so no need to meditate; anyway I am doing Sadhana twenty-four hours. When God wills, he will call me to satsang and advanced courses again!" Such excuses should not be justified as dispassion.

When you want to do some service, the mind goes, "Oh, its all Maya, anyway everything is an illusion. It's all just happening. Things will happen when the time comes!" In this way Knowledge gets misused and is quoted out of context to suit one's convenience or laziness. In the name of dispassion do not lose that spark of enthusiasm and interest. Using Knowledge like this you miss out a lot. Keep the fire of longing for the Divine and service to the society alive. Dispassion here would be detrimental.

49. Gurudev, receiving unconditional love from you has become such a habit that whenever I get into a relationship, I look for the same love in the other person, and none of the relationships work out for me. What do I do?

Sri Sri: Actually, I am not qualified to speak about the secret of relationships! However, I will tell you this, you may pour all your love on somebody, but you should also see how much love they can take.

When water is falling with a lot of force, you cannot stand underneath it; you will lose your head. So, you need to control the tap. If you open the tap with full force and keep an empty bottle under it, the bottle will remain empty. You have to open the tap only so much such that the bottle gets filled. Have you had this experience?

Similarly, when you love somebody unconditionally, do not express it all at once. They will run away. How many of you have had this experience? In the Bhagavad-Gita there is a saying, 'Samah Shatrau Cha Mitre Cha Thathaa Maanaapa-maana-yoho'. (He who is the same to foe and friend and also in honor and dishonor, who is the same in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment) How does a yogi (spiritual seeker) deal with friends and enemies? Whether friends or enemies, the yogi puts them all in one basket

and keeps an equanimous state of mind. This is because you never know when a friend will become an enemy, and when an enemy will become a very good friend. This is a fact.

Our whole life works on some strange karma, some strange laws of nature. So just rely on yourself, this is what self-reliance means and do not wish bad things for anybody. Often, when someone hates somebody they start cursing them. Do not curse anybody, come what may. At the most, we must wish for them to have a good mind, 'Let their intellect become alright'.

In Hindi, we say, 'Bhagwan, inko sadbuddhi do' (Oh God, bless them with a good intellect, or turn their mind around). This is a common prayer in India. It is a very good prayer, and also a good attitude to keep in life. There are four kinds of attitude that are good to have in life:

1) Friendliness: Be friendly with people who are happy. If you are not friendly with happy people, you will be jealous. This is because you think that your enemy is happy, and you cannot tolerate your enemy being happy. So, shake hands with happy people. Such an attitude does a lot of good to your mind.

2) Compassion: Do not be friendly with people who are miserable, instead, have compassion for them. If you are friendly with unhappy people you will become unhappy and if you become unhappy, you can never help them to come out of their misery. So, there is a different flavour of your relation with them.

Many people have gotten into trouble by being friendly with unhappy people; both become miserable. It is like a doctor going to a patient who is sick, and the doctor also becomes sick.

If the doctor also thinks, 'How can I alone be healthy? Let me also share the patient's misery', then who will help the patient then?

So, what should be the attitude with people who are miserable? Compassion, not pity.

3) Happiness: For people who are doing good work or who are successful in the world, you should feel happy as though you are doing it.

For example, someone is a good singer, singing and bringing joy to everybody, seeing him you should think, 'I feel so happy that this person is singing so well, and making everyone happy'.

If someone is a good entertainer and he entertains everybody you should feel happy about it. If someone is a great architect and builds beautiful buildings you should feel happy about it. Whenever someone does a good job, share that happiness with them; we need to have this attitude.

4) Indifference: For people who are doing horrible things in the society, destroying themselves, we usually get angry with them. When you are angry, your mind suffers a huge loss. You lose so much energy; you lose your mood, and your enthusiasm. When energy and enthusiasm goes away from you, you become angry and are no better than the other person. You do not know what you are doing. So, what should you do in such a situation? Have a sort of indifference in your mind.

For example, there are thieves in the world, they are there, what can you do about them? First accept, be indifferent. However, this does not mean you do not take any action. Your mind is indifferent (unaffected), but you act on it. These are the four attitudes that will help us to save our mind. This is what we need to do, save our mind at all costs.

50. Once you put in the effort you have to relax. To get to a destination, you have to put in the effort to get to the train or bus, but once you are on it you have to relax. You will not get anything by being feverish about your wants.

51. Four Ways to Look at Hurt:

1. Someone who has hurt you is pained. They have scars and are unhappy. They can only share what they have. They are hurt and they are sharing the hurt with you. You think they are doing it purposely, but in fact it is because they do not have happiness inside them. They are wounded. What is required for a wounded person? Compassion; you have to be compassionate to those who hurt you, because they are hurt and wounded themselves.

2. Those who are causing hurt to you are ignorant. They don't know that their actions are hurting others. They are ignorant and arrogant. You can only feel sorry for them and hope that someday they will become intelligent. Wish for them to be more sensitive.

3. It is just karma. You had to get this hurt and if not this person then someone else would have given it to you. We must have caused some hurt to someone in the past and Nature is bringing it back to us now. When you know that it's just karma being repaid, you feel settled.

4. It is being done to make you strong. Nature is bringing this to you so that you become strong, so that you discover strength and power within you.

52. Guruji, how to live life with absolute confidence that Guru or God is there to take care of me when I have surrendered?

Sri Sri: There is no way you can do it! You simply have to bear the cross. 'Whatever happens, happens', just say that and then see what happens.

If you're trying to bring in confidence, it doesn't work at all. 'I want to keep my faith', what faith do you want to keep? Throw your faith! You're trying to keep your faith is such a burden I tell you. Instead say, 'I don't care!' If there is faith, it is there. If there is no faith, it is not there, what can you do? It is as simple as that. Even faith is a gift. You cannot try to force faith on your head or your heart.

Sometimes, even when your head, with all its chattering and all its negativity discards faith, still, something in you stirs and pulls you in that direction. Just recognize when this happens and it does happen. Someone says, 'I don't believe in anything', but still he sits and does his meditation and if you ask him, 'Why are you doing meditation?' He says, 'Well, something tells me to do it'.

A person says, 'I don't believe in Guru!' Yet, when Gurudev comes, he will say, 'Since I have nothing to do, let me go there', and he will be there. Something pulls the person, makes him come to the airport, or come to the satsang. What is that?

You decided that you don't have faith, and you tried hard to destroy your faith, or deny that you have any faith, and still, there is something that came along, that didn't allow you to let go. There you must recognize, 'Yes, faith is there'.

So, faith cannot be imposed, it is there. Once it comes, it stays. If it goes, it makes you miserable. When you become miserable, know that, 'Faith is gone, that is why I am miserable' and you don't want to be miserable. So the moment you resolve that 'I don't want to be miserable', then faith continues to stay back. Faith was there anyway, it just re-surfaces again. Faith remains, and it surfaces when sattva or purity or harmony happens in you. All that you can do is, keep the harmony, and keep your mind clear through proper exercise, food and knowledge. All this will help you grow in that direction.

53. Whenever you are happy and peaceful, your mind is in touch with your being. When you are disturbed because of thoughts and emotions, then you are unable to see the peace, which is always there.

54. Is it ok to be driven by emotions?

Sri Sri: The difference between a human and a stone is that, humans have emotions. When feelings are combined with wisdom, then that is good. It's like when water flows between two banks, we call it river. But if water is scattered all over the place, then that is flood. In life, along with intellect, feelings are also to be nourished. To maintain a balance between intellect and emotions is wisdom.

55. If we have to choose between happiness and enlightenment, what should we choose?

Sri Sri: Enlightenment is the biggest happiness. Why to go after small happiness when the biggest is there?

It is not easy to believe in God. God is there: if you experience this then the mind calms down. Then you find only God is there and I don't exist.

Inn ankhon mein ankh mila ke dekho to sahi, pyar dikhta hai ki nahi,
Ek kadam bada ke dekho to sahi, rasta milta hai ki nahi,
Hath batake dekho to sahi, kaam hota hai ki nahi,
Ek baar muskarake dekho to sahi, duniya apnati hai ke nahin,
Ek baar naam le ke dekho to sahi, jeevan safal hota hai ke nahi.

When these eyes meet yours, will you not catch a glimpse of love?
Take just one step forward, will you not find the entire way?
Extend your hand, will you not find the work is done?
Smile just once; will the world not make you its own?
Take the name even once; will your life not be fulfilled?

56. Respect and Ego

There are two types of respect:

1. Respect that comes to you because of your position, fame or wealth. This type of respect is impermanent. It can be lost once you lose your wealth or status.
2. Respect that comes because of your virtues like honesty, kindness, commitment, patience and your smile. This respect, no one can take away.

The less you are attached to your virtues, the more self-respect you have. If you get attached to your virtues, you look down upon everybody else, and the virtues start diminishing. Non- attachment to virtues brings the highest self-respect.

Often one confuses ego with self-esteem. Ego needs the other for comparison; self-esteem is just confidence in oneself. For example, a gentleman claims that he is thorough in Mathematics or Geography, this is self-esteem. But to say that I know better than you, that is Ego.

Ego simply means lack of respect to the Self.

Ego upsets you very often. Self-esteem is immune to getting upset by external factors. In self-respect, everything is a game, winning or losing has no meaning, every step is joy, and

every move is celebration.

57. Guruji, please tell us about the 'Inner Transformation' you advocate to us.

Sri Sri: We forget about our body, our mind, our breath, which is a whole technology in itself. The body is a machine, and the Consciousness, which operates this body, which has helped to develop this body, we have ignored that. We need to pay attention to that as well. Then a new dimension to life opens up.

It is because of Consciousness that technology exists today in the world. In somebody's mind, the ideas come and then the ideas manifest as technology and where do these ideas come from? And what helps to translate the ideas into reality? That is Consciousness. This Consciousness, which is responsible for all creativity, all scientific discoveries in the world, all forms of music, art, fashion, film, and everything else, needs your attention.

The same Consciousness, in which scientific discoveries happen, in which art and architecture develops, is also a store house of happiness. The same Consciousness can manifest health, can manifest happiness, and can manifest love and compassion. So this one Consciousness which is working in our brain and in the different parts of our body has so many abilities. The same Consciousness can be very logical, it can understand, it can comprehend, it can create, and it can also manifest compassion, love, peace and joy - just like the cell phone.

See, how many programs are there in a cell phone. There is a camera, twitter, SMS facility, a telephone, clock, book and a music player. Now, I should know how to turn it off the music player as well. Sometimes, our mind is like that, it starts and then it goes on and on and on, and we don't know how to shut it off, isn't that so!

A cell phone has multi-functions, and so do our brain and our life. We can open our Consciousness to different levels of reality. This is not just the only reality that exists.

So if you have kept this Consciousness active only for art or music and that is it, then life is not complete or if it is only for science and logic, it is not complete. If you are open to just having fun and being merry, then life is not complete. So just like how you have to switch on and switch off different functions of a cell phone, we can have the ability to switch on and off all the abilities that nature has provided in us.

There is certain simplicity inside you. We have all been born with that innocence and simplicity. When we grew up somewhere we lost that. As we grew up, we stopped smiling, we stopped being natural, and we stopped being simple. Isn't that so! So what is essential is both, sensibility and sensitivity. Anything that is illogical, that does not appeal to reason, we should not accept. So first is logic, this function is important because it creates sensibility.

Now, just sensibility is not enough, you need sensitivity. Sensitivity is a matter of the heart. You can be very logical but you need to understand the viewpoints of others as well. Many times, what people say, they behave in that exact manner. They are very correct, but they can hurt others easily. So the second important thing is being sensitive. There are people who are too sensitive. They lose their logic. They become an emotional soggy noodle. This is no good either. You need the perfect balance of sensitivity and sensibility. This is one function of the technology of Consciousness.

Next come's Serenity in life. Everyone, at one point or another, in their lives, even for a few seconds or few minutes have felt very serene and when you feel that serenity, you also have felt Silence, and you felt very spiritual; a deep sense of silence and serenity.

In many of our mobile phone this operation is switched off, or we have not used it at all. In our Consciousness, we have not even touched this function - and that is where The Art of Living comes. It helps you to smile more, serve more. Smiling and serving. Being sensible and sensitive. Experiencing silence and serenity. That is it!

58. Can you tell us about Kali Yuga?

Sri Sri: There are four Yugas; time is divided into four aspects.

1. Satya Yuga, when there is a lot of positivity.
2. Treta Yuga, when the positivity goes a little down.
3. Dvapara Yuga, when the positivity goes a little more down.
4. Kali Yuga, when positivity goes down even more. These are what are said about Kali Yuga.

But I tell you, within Kali Yuga there is Satya Yuga. The days when you feel happy, know that you are in Satya Yuga and when you are totally miserable, you are in Kali Yuga. In that sense, within the big Kali Yuga also, there are good times.

59. Secret of Influence

Wanting to influence is itself a problem. What do you get by influencing people around you? You don't know one secret: if you influence somebody, or make a big impression on them, they become jealous of you and then, they try to pull you down. Or they don't care and they make fun of you. In either case, what do you gain? More problems.

Just be your natural self. Simplicity, honesty, contentment, and creativity - these will influence all the people around you.

60. Guruji, please let us know what is the biggest limitation for human beings?

Sri Sri: Body has limitation, mind has limitation, but the spirit has no limitation. When you think you are the body then you have limitation. Then you can do only that much.

When you think you are the mind, mind also has some limitation. But your love has no limitation. Your consciousness has no limitation. See, how with one small cell phone, you can reach the whole world. You can reach any number of phone numbers with one call phone, isn't it?

Similarly, our mind, which invented the cell phone, is much more powerful than the cell phone itself. You only need to make it available.

61. Gurudev, I don't get the things I want the most. Is my want an impediment?

Sri Sri: Have patience. Three things are needed to achieve what you want.

1. Real intention - There should be a real need to have whatever it is you want. Our wants keep changing, but if it is our need, we will get it. The want has to become our need.
2. Self-effort - One has to put effort for whatever you want. You can't simply sit, and keep wishing, 'I want this, I want that!' Have you put your effort? Has the want become your need? Have you worked towards it? Have you put your 100%? This is necessary.
3. Time or karma - If karma is there, the time is right, you will get it! Suppose, I wish to see the moon now, on a dark night. No matter what intention I put, how can I see the moon now? I have to wait for another 15 days to see the full moon. On the new moon day, if you are wishing for the full moon, then you have to wait.

If you plant a pomegranate tree today and say, 'No, I want the fruit now!' Come on, you have to wait for another three years! The pomegranate tree will give you fruit only in two to three years. So, time or karma is a factor.

62. From Boone Ashram New Year Message by Guruji

The last days of the year is time for reflections, time for a deep contemplation of the past year.

The talk by Sri Sri was given in Boone, USA during Christmas.

People ask me very often how I see the future and I say that the future is for them to build, however they want it. The unwise regret the past, think the future is destiny and are miserable in present. The wise see their past as destiny, the future as free will and are

happy in the present.

However significant the events of the past year were at the time, looking back, you cannot see them all as anything but a dream. Reflecting on these events, what stands out is the impermanent nature of all things. Events are like stones and pebbles in the great river of time which keeps flowing unabated.

Just like we live in the outer world of events and circumstances, we also live in the inner world of emotions and feelings, which we are not always aware of. Meditation is the best tool to wipe your mind clean off all past impressions that weigh you down. The distance between the outer and the inner worlds is just the blink of an eye.

Yoga is the skill of keeping attention on the inner world while acting in the outer. When you are lost in the outside world, there is disharmony in the inner and life is like a war. When you are established in the inner world, there is clarity in the outer and life becomes a game.

63. Sincerity and Blessings

Q: Many ask for blessings but only a few will receive it. Why?

Sri Sri: The giver is anyway giving but the taker is not there - the sincerity is missing. One who gives blessings gives it freely but the one who receives it has to be sincere. Sincerity is the qualification to receive blessings and everyone is free to be sincere at any point of time or space.

Q: Why do people choose to be sincere only sometimes?

Sri Sri: Because of the illusion that they are going to miss some mundane pleasure. Hankering after pleasure makes them insincere. When you are sincere you simply enjoy pleasure.

Poor people fight for food. Rich people share their food. Richer are those people who share power. Richer still are those who share fame. Richest are those who share themselves. Richness of a person is indicated by his ability to share and not by what he hoards. Godliness is enjoying sharing fame.

"Sincerity is being in touch with your Depth".

64. Guruji, how to help my father learn how to handle his negative emotions. Also, how can I accept his chaos at work, since I work with him?

Sri Sri: It is a tough job. Different generations have different styles of working. You have to

have a lot of patience, and skill in communicating with him.

Sometimes the older generation, they don't know how to delegate work. They believe so much in perfection that they want to do it all by themselves. That becomes an issue for the younger generation. So do one thing, when he becomes negative, you just quietly slip away from there. Don't argue. Argument does not work there at all. Even if you are right in whatever you are saying, he will not take it. He is holding on to his position and he will not let go.

It is tough, but skillfully you have to put your ideas forth. You need a lot of skill there and silence is the mother of all skills.

See, you will ask me, 'Why should I come and keep silence for three days Guruji. What is the point? Let me talk'. When you are silent, you tap the source of skills and those skills come up in you.

65. A wise man is happy even in bad time.

People who are willing to serve will have good times even in the bad times. When there are problems such as famine or war-torn countries, the Red Cross people will be fine as they are serving. The more relief they bring, the happier they feel and people who are selfish and who just want to enjoy themselves will be miserable even in good times. Often the organizers of a party do not enjoy the party because some little thing is missing, they forgot to invite somebody, somebody did not come or some little thing went wrong.

A wise one is happy even in bad times and the stupid one is unhappy even in good times. You make the time good or bad. People usually blame the bad time and wait for the good time. Even if an astrologer says that you have a hopeless time, you can make it a good time!

Like weather, time has its own impact on you. But your Satsang and sadhana are your shield, your protection! So realize that you are more than time and that you can move the time by your connection to the Divine.

Don't feel shy to speak about human and spiritual values. Time has come now to call the whole world!

The all is calling,
The ball is rolling!
Time is milling,
The Soul is willing.

66. Time poses challenges; it is for you to see how you can benefit from these challenges. Every time a challenge is in front of you, see how you can make this challenge, an opportunity for your own growth. How you can turn it and utilize it for your own growth. This is what you need to do.

67. Nothing Matters

I want to see everyone smiling and happy. Just create waves of happiness, everything else is irrelevant. In the world things happen, some pleasant, some unpleasant. Some things happen the way you want it, some things don't happen the way you want. Bundle it all and put it aside. Nothing can really take away your happiness.

When you have had a good meditation, and when the prana is high, what do you feel? Nothing matters! Right? How many of you feel that way? (Many in the audience raise their hands) Nothing really matters! This is what we need to know. When you know nothing matters, you are happy. Happiness is our very nature. What overshadows this happiness is, 'I want this' or 'I want that'. 'I want something', this is what puts away happiness.

When you say nothing whatsoever matters, immediately freedom is there. Just keep this in mind, that's all. Nothing, what so ever will matter!

In the world there is always some imperfection, some pleasant things, some unpleasant things. Some things happen the way you want it to happen, some things the way you don't want it to happen; it's part of creation. When nothing matters to you then things happen the way you want 90% things would automatically happen, or whatever is happening that is what you would want.

68. Celebrate life without an excuse

Everything in this creation is a sign of celebration. Every day should be a celebration and when there is celebration, there is no violence.

Everybody of you may be celebrating New Year. Celebration of New Year is to honor time. Honoring time means honoring the mind, and honoring the mind means honoring yourself. The way to honor yourself is to know that you are neither a culprit, nor a victim.

A poor man celebrates the New Year once a year. A rich man celebrates each day, but the richest man celebrates every moment.

How rich are you? Do you celebrate once a year? Once a month? Every day? If you celebrate every moment, you are the Lord of Creation. There are two types of celebration. One is as thanksgiving, an expression of gratitude for the Divine. The second comes from

dropping the past and moving forward, knowing that life is eternal. Any excuse to celebrate is good.

Life is a celebration. You must grab and use every opportunity, everyday, to celebrate and be grateful. When you know, I am ever pure; celebration will never stop in your life. Intrinsically we all are pure by nature; but the moment you feel this, that you are pure, your heart is pure, you don't wish anything bad for anybody on this planet or any other planet, and then you are love.

How can celebration happen? Celebration cannot happen by just putting flowers and balloons; it has to happen from within. What are the qualifications and conditions needed for celebration to happen? Have you thought about it?

(Audience: Feeling grateful, feeling happy).

It's a Catch; if you celebrate, you are happy; if you are happy, you celebrate.

(Audience: Contentment; good company, wanting to have somebody to celebrate with; feeling at home, a sense of security).

Yes, if you are fearful, you cannot celebrate. Being in love; a sense of belongingness!

(Audience: Good food).

Of course, food is part of celebration. If you are hungry, you can't celebrate!

(Audience: Exchange food and drink?)

Listen; do you really see people who exchange food and drinks are happy? Or in a celebration? Look at their faces!

Then we need a sense of purity. When you feel clean, you can celebrate. When you feel dirty, can you celebrate? If you are working on the drainage system, and someone comes and tells you, 'Come, let's celebrate', you will say, 'No, I am dirty. Let me take a shower, then I will come and celebrate'. Don't you say that?

So what do you need to celebrate? A sense of purity - Cleanliness. Celebration is when you feel clean, outside and inside. People who think they are the worst sinners cannot celebrate since that guilt and sin is eating them up. So a sense of purity, outside and inside.

When you know, I am ever pure; celebration will never stop in your life. Intrinsically we all are pure by nature; but the moment you feel this, that you are pure, your heart is pure, you don't wish anything bad for anybody on this planet or any other planet, then you are love and you are blossoming. Then there is alertness, wakefulness inside you.

You are ever pure, and silence is the scent of pureness. Silence, and this understanding that I am ever pure, makes life a celebration.

Human life is a combination of matter, i.e., body and spirit or vibration. Isn't it? Pleasure or joy is becoming intense vibration. Joy is forgetting that you are matter and so you become intense vibration. All the carnal instincts will also make you feel intense vibrations momentarily and that's how they give a glimpse of joy. But the thing is, it is short lived and it makes you dense later on.

Pleasure that comes from Satsang is of a higher nature. Mantra and singing create vibrations in the spirit. That's why when you sing; the ecstasy stays for a long time. Pleasure in the subtle is long lasting, energizing, refreshing and freeing. Pleasure from the gross is short lived, tiring and binding.

When you know you are electricity (vibration/energy), then craving, greed, lust and anger disappear and you become true celebration.

In true celebration, you are not just having a party. When sanctity is attached to it, celebration becomes complete. The body, mind and the spirit rejoice. If celebration uplifts and unites all around you, if it frees them of the traumatic past and hold out hope for the future, then you will not feel guilty. That type of celebration is service. It is sacred. Turn your celebration into a sacred offering for society rather than a self-centered, pleasure-seeking one.

When celebration has a tinge of sanctity and prayer, it gains depth and dignity. It is not just entertainment for the mind or excitement for body, but nourishment for the soul. Instead of beginning a celebration with intoxicants, begin a fresh with an act of kindness, a moment of reflection.

Celebration is an attitude, to celebrate life you don't have to spend a lot of money. Celebration comes from enthusiasm and joy. When you are depressed, that's when celebration is needed the most. Reconcile with the past and move on to the future with enthusiasm. Share what you have with others.

Life will always move in the direction of the best. On the way you may find some rough roads, but they will lead you to a better life. Difficulties give you depth and joy gives you width. The wise see their past as destiny, the future as free will and are happy in the present. The unwise regret the past, think the future is destined and are miserable in present. The choice is yours. Keep smiling. The past has taught us many lessons; what we should be doing and what we should not. Every pain that we went through brought us some depth, and all the joys and pleasures gave us a new vision of life and hope for the future.

Welcome the future with a genuine smile. That smile comes when you know for sure that you are loved. If you don't know the Divine loves you, you will not be able to celebrate life. You will live in insecurity, with insecurity comes greed, with greed comes selfishness and with that comes anger, with anger comes lust and with that comes sadness and misery one

behind the other, like a chain.

Look back and try to remember how many days in the past you were entangled in such a pattern. When you do this, do not reject anything. Let your attention be on the Self. This is a delicate balance. That balance is yoga. That balance is spirituality.

Celebration can be attributed to any reason, because the nature of our spirit is to celebrate. Any celebration has to be spiritual. A celebration without spirituality does not have any depth. A celebration has social, emotional and spiritual components. Often, we focus on the first two and forget the third. True celebration happens when the spiritual aspect is attended to.

Some people think being silent is spirituality e.g. many meditators feel that laughing, singing and dancing are not spiritual. Some people think only celebration is spirituality. E.g. In some parts of the world, such as in rural India or Africa, celebration means loud music; there is no silence at all.

Spirituality is a harmonious blend of outer silence and inner celebration; and also inner silence and outer celebration!

Often people who are celebrating cannot appreciate silence and those who enjoy silence don't celebrate. They don't look that joyful and celebrative. People who are in silence are very morose and melancholic, but our specialty is, we are in silence and we are celebrating. This is so beautiful.

Celebrate while you are alone and when you are with people. Some know to celebrate when they are in a crowd. Some can only rejoice alone in silence. I tell you to do both.

Celebration that comes out of silence is real celebration. The celebration that comes out of silence is very authentic because it is coming from the depth. Celebrate the silence and celebrate the noise. Celebrate the life and celebrate the death. This is the Eleventh Commandment!

Precious moments are few in life. Catch them and treasure them. Place, time, mood of mind are factors that influence celebration. Snatch every opportunity to celebrate, and then you feel great and full and then celebration infiltrates your mind in all moods and space, and celebration is inevitable.

Celebration reminds you of the fullness of the moment. The moments you are in the company of knowledge - the Master - are the most precious moments in your life. Treasure them. Treasuring them you transcend the mind, time and space and that is true celebration.

The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate.

69. Being a Witness

When you do something very good and you say, 'Oh I did it, I did it', that too makes you unhappy. Doing something good also make you unhappy because you do so much and then you say that nobody recognizes you, nobody listens to you.

So not being recognized for your good work makes you miserable, and if you do something wrong, that too eats up your spirit and creates a sense of guilt. When such things happen, know that you are not the doer. Be a witness then.

70. Why is God unfair?

Sri Sri: People who do wrong things have to fall and if they fall from a short height, they won't get hurt! They go all the way up so that they can fall well and get the right punishment!

71. I feel my life is like the stock market, always up and down. How do I make the graph stable?

Sri Sri: So many times you have thought that this is the end of life that heaven has fallen on your head! Turn back and see that you are always helped and know that in the future also you will get help from some unknown hand and that is Divinity. Know that there is a power that is watching on you, that is going to take you along, that is never going to let go of you. Then you will never say that your life is a stock market.

72. How to Handle Mistakes

Never mind all the mistakes you did in the past. Whatever mistakes you have done, you have learnt some lessons from them. There is no point in regretting this moment for the last moment which is already gone. Resolve right now, 'This moment I am innocent, I am pure, I am part of the light, I am love', and think what you can do in the next moment.

So, you have to pull yourself up again and again, to see (keep your attention on) the future. Depression is always thinking about the past and then fearing the future.

Spiritual knowledge is that which gives you the strength for the future, 'Nothing to worry; only the best can happen to me because my heart is clean, and my mind is clear'.

73. Life is a combination of both (destiny and chance). There is a little role played by our destiny, and a greater part played by our free will also. So it is never either this or that alone. Like for any moment, there is both a past and a future also. There is not a single moment that does not have a past or that does not have a future.

So, the past is destiny, the future is free will, and the present moment is so beautiful. If you see things this way, then you are very wise, but if you think the other way around – that the past was free will, the future is destiny and the present is miserable, it is not a wise thing to do. It shows a lack of wisdom. Then life becomes miserable.

Can you see a moment without a past? It is impossible. Can there be a moment without a future? Again it is impossible. So if you ask me, 'Is life the past or the future', I would say that it is a combination of both.

Destiny and free will are not two different things. They are two sides of the same coin. What do you call as destiny? When your thoughts are not in alignment with what is happening, and then you call it as destiny. When your thoughts are in alignment with what is happening, then you call it as free will. It all depends on the direction of your thoughts.

How can you choose the direction of your thoughts? You can do that only when your mind is clear and settled. All that we need to do and achieve in our life is: purity in our heart, clarity in our mind and skill or dexterity in our actions. We need to bring spontaneity in our action. That is what is necessary. Got it?

As a child we had all three, did we not? Children are very clear in their minds. Have you ever seen the way they look at you? They look directly at you. Their mind is very clear. If you look into their eyes, you will see that the mind is very clear, but as adults we seem to have lost the purity of the heart and the clarity of our mind.

A child's mind is very clear and its heart is very pure. It is so spontaneous. We can do the same thing when we grow up also. So you need to have dexterity both in your action and expression.

At the end of the Sudarshan Kriya, you get a glimpse of samadhi, for a few seconds. Sometimes you are aware, sometimes you are not aware of it and at this moment all the karmas, the latent impressions in the mind get burned down and erased.

74. Spread Happiness This New Year (Today is Chinese New Year)

Sri Sri: Another year is passing by and this past year has also enriched us by its experiences. Time keeps posing challenges; it is for you to see how you can benefit from these challenges. In Chinese, there is only one word for crisis as well as opportunity - because every crisis is an opportunity to exhibit your strength, skill and abilities to endure any

situation, circumstance.

Every time a challenge is in front of you, see how you can make it an opportunity for your growth. As you are coming to the end of this year, think of how you handled these challenges, what mistakes you made, and what lessons you learnt. Second, think of gifts that the past year has brought to your life, and how you are going to utilize these gifts to make life better on the planet.

Next, you need to be ready to learn new lessons in life. Keep the cheer, the joy and smile throughout the journey of life. Everybody is on a conveyor belt and the belt is moving. Some are crying, some are laughing, but the conveyor belt is anyway moving. So, it is your choice, how do you want to move on this conveyor belt of time.

Welcome the coming New Year with a resolution. Resolve to be of use to others. Resolve to be happy and spread happiness. Happiness is our very nature. What overshadows this happiness is, 'I want this', or, 'I want that'. 'I want something'. When you say nothing whatsoever matters, immediately there is freedom. In the world there is always some imperfection; some things are pleasant and some unpleasant. Some things happen the way you want, some things happen the way you don't want. When nothing matters to you then things happen the way you want.

Hold on to the faith that only good will happen to you. Hold on to the faith, and let go of cravings. If you let go of cravings, you will be happy. If something unpleasant is happening to you, it is because nature wants to make you strong. Resolve to do something good in society, and have the confidence that whatever you need will be given to you.

75. Handling Cheating in a Relationship

Not everybody who loves cheats, but anyone who cheats, it is because they love their wife or husband very much. Do you know why? If there is a fight between truth and love, love will win, truth will fail. Cheating means what? Telling lies. Why does a husband lie to his wife? Because he is afraid he might lose the love of his wife. So, because of the fear of losing love, he tells lies.

If the husband or wife assures them, 'Come on, whatever you do, I accept you as you are. Just tell me the truth. If you have any weaknesses, I will forgive you. In spite of your weaknesses, I am going to love you the same'. If this assurance is given, they will tell the truth.

Why is it that nobody cheats on a mother? Because you know that mother's love is not going to change. So you go and tell your mother. You don't want to tell your wife, why? If you tell her, she may not take it easily. She may stop loving you. The same is with the husband too.

You will go and confess to your father because you know that your father will scold you, or shout at you, and then tomorrow your father will accept you, but a husband? Someone can even confess to their son, but with the husband there is a little fear. What is that fear? May be I will lose their love.

It is deep inside. It is a psychological fear. The fear of losing love is more than telling the truth.

Create that space for your spouse, 'Look, whatever you have done, tell me and I will understand you, accept you and I am with you'.

There are many couples who share all their mistakes very honestly, and they still love each other. There they don't cheat. They simply tell their weaknesses and wrong doings, but if they hide something, it is only because they fear of losing (the love of their spouse). So, just know this. If there is a competition between love and truth, truth is going to lose.

76. How do we know whether we are progressing on the spiritual path or not?

Sri Sri: There are three points you should always bear in mind when you have come on the spiritual path.

The first is God is mine. You should think that, 'God is present right here, and is within me'. Have faith in that and simply relax. You should do whatever seva you can do. Just observe, all of us are present here today, yet, do not all the events that have happened until today appear like a dream?

Just try to remember what you did a day back, two days back, one month back, a few months back, or what you did exactly one year back on this same day of Makar Sankranti. Does it not feel that all events have passed you by, like a dream?

Right now you are sitting here. But this event too will end and you all will go home. Then this too will appear to be a dream. In the same way, each day will pass by and one day, we will be no more. But this Earth will remain, and continue to exist.

When you think in this way, your entire perspective and way of thinking shifts to a very different level altogether, from where you can say with awareness that 'I am not the body, I am the eternal spirit. I have always been and will continue to be for eternity. I will appear on this planet again and again in the future'. This experience will not come simply by listening. It can come only when you go deep within yourself.

That is why it is said that you need both Vairagya (dispassion) and Abhyasa (regular practice). When there is a shift or change in your perception, the entire creation appears very differently to you.

77. A Deep Rest

You cannot rest when you have to do something which you cannot and you cannot rest when you feel you have to be someone whom you are not. You are not required to do what you cannot. You will not be asked to give what you cannot give. Nothing is expected of you that you cannot do. Doing service involves only doing what you can do and no one wants you to be someone whom you are not.

This realization brings you deep rest. You cannot rest if you have either ambition or lethargy. Both are opposed to good rest. A lazy person will toss and turn at night and be "rest-less" and an ambitious person will burn inside.

This rest brings up your talents and abilities and brings you closer to your nature. Even a slight feeling that the Divine is with you brings deep rest, and prayer, love and meditation are all flavors of deep rest.

78. When someone hurts us, we get into depression.

Sri Sri: How can others hurt you? Those who hurt others are foolish. Will you blame anyone who is actually foolish or is mentally ill? No, isn't it?

So, just think that those who hurt you are either foolish or ill. If you think like this, then you will not feel hurt. Okay?

If you think that everyone should act wisely, how is it possible? Everyone has their own little mind, own desires, problems and ignorance. Just accept them.

No one can hurt us until we permit them to do so.

79. Suffering isn't dependent on the world being good or bad, but on how willing we are to use wisdom in this moment.

80. "Nothing stays forever. Good as well as bad times go away. Be happy, reminding yourself of this again and again. Everything is destructible here. Everything is changing – your body, your intellect. Everything will dissolve. So many years have passed like a moment. Time is running so fast. If you feel there is something, which is not changing, that is your consciousness. Let us settle there, which is not changing. Make use of this time in the best manner".

81. Guruji, apart from being friendly to everyone, what kind of friends I need to have in my life? And what to do when my friends don't stand up to me or don't trust me in times of need?

Sri Sri: Listen, don't analyze anybody. This is another conclusion. Stop analyzing anyone. Where is the time to analyze somebody, and don't analyze yourself also. Just relax, know there is a power that is taking care of everything and the power loves you. Know this and just relax. Yeah? Best idea? You are at peace, and you will be helped that way. It is not someone who is going to help us; we have to do our thing and nature is with us, there is a power with us which nobody can understand, even we cannot understand. So, just trust in that power and relax.

82. Don't sit and look only for your comfort. See how much comfort you can bring to others. Make others comfortable, and you will find that nature is taking care of your comfort. Be full of enthusiasm and zeal. Enthusiasm is like a sword, which cuts through anything, and, then you will blossom. You should say I'm ready for challenge. This readiness will make you happy!

83. There is no better entertainer than your own mind. Your mind can provide you with non-stop 24/7 entertainments. Not one, but a hundred channels run in your head. Comedy, tragedy, thrill, all of these keep running. It is amazing. Just keep enjoying it, make sure you keep the remote control in your hands. Don't be worried that - this should not be in my mind, that should be not in my mind - let it display whatever it is displaying, as long as the control is in your hands. When the control is not in your hands, then problems arise in life.

84. "Who cares for your Feelings, and when none cares for your feelings? Why do you care? Kick them. Throw them out. Listen to your intellect.

Whatever you have to get you will get it. What is due to you will come. Whatever action you have to do, you do that.

Only two questions will come at the time of death: How much love you have given? How much knowledge you gained?

85. God is all abundant, all full and we are connected to God. Then why are we in debt, except for some? Why do they have, and we don't have?

Sri Sri: Is it only money? You have abundance, yet at the same time, you are indebted. So how can both be true? How can you be indebted and at the same time have abundance? When you say you are indebted, that means you have received. Otherwise how can you be indebted? So be thankful for being indebted, because you have received. Those who have

received should feel indebted. If you don't feel indebted, you cannot have abundance. So the more indebted you feel, the more abundance you have.

Feel indebted. Feel gratitude. Then abundance comes. As long as you are wanting for abundance you get indebted. Feel indebtedness and gratitude, then abundance comes. Abundance and indebtedness coexist. You think you are indebted, but you really are not. It is better to feel totally indebted, because every bit of what you have doesn't belong to you, including your body. Then you are infinitely indebted for your body, for Knowledge, for things you have received, and for your own life. Then you bask in the abundance of the Creator.

86. We are so grateful to you, what should we do?

Sri Sri: When you have a total sense of belonging, then gratefulness does not become an obligation. Such gratefulness is for the Divine only, which enhances strength.

When you are on a spiritual path, you are not thankful or obliged to anybody. In the Gita, Krishna says, "He is dear to me who neither goes on thanking people nor hates anyone (Na abhinandati na dveshthi)". Thanking and feeling obliged indicates that you believe in some one else's existence rather than in the Divine who is ruling everything. When you feel obliged, then you are not honoring the principles of karma or the divine plan.

Appreciate people for what they are; do not thank them for what they do. Otherwise your thankfulness is centered on ego. You are grateful, but not for an act. You are grateful for what is. As every individual is nothing but a puppet of the one, thanking and being obliged is simply an exhibition of ignorance. Everything is ruled, controlled and managed by one Divinity that consciousness has to shine forth in every act of yours; you do not have to make a mood of it.

I tell you rests all are beggars even if they have money. Walk like a King; Walk like a Lion; don't be like insects. Be strong. This is not ego but the existence. Birds cheering (see birds are also listening). Read Yoga Vasistha. Whenever your mind is stuck listen to Yoga Vasistha within few minutes your mind will be free. There is saying "Gyan ke saman pavitra karni wali aur koi cheez nahi hai"

Wake up.... Wake up.... Life is so short. It is going to finish soon. Feel belonging. Those who are newly married should get this lesson of "How to love" and not to police each other. Don't ask, "Do you really love me!" You should ask, "Why do you love me so much?" Demand destroys love. This is law of nature - "if you will give love, love will come to you 10 times more". Know that you are here on this planet to give.

Tough times come so what!! Walk like a King. The more your world is limited the more your problems will be (I am not telling here to renounce world but extend your family - laugh).

Sometimes you get praised so what; sometimes people criticise you so what. Listen to both. Who cares for your feeling that if you have taken medicine or if you have pain in leg (laugh). Wake up.

87. Know one thing that you are connected to the Lord of Universe (cheers). What I want I will get. It has to happen god has no choice. Feel that connection. Don't be beggar that I want success, money, this - that. You don't know where god is but yes my and mine connection with lord is there and as you don't see god, Guru becomes gateway to god.

88. If your intention is right, then the right action follows. In any action, there can never be 100% perfection. But your intention can always be perfect.

89. How does a desire arise?

Sri Sri: A desire arises with the memory of a pleasant experience and past impressions.

A desire might arise through listening.

A desire can be triggered through the association of certain people and a place. Someone else's need or desire may manifest in you as your own desire, e.g. when someone is hungry, you get a desire to feed them or someone wants to talk to you and you get a desire to talk to them.

The destiny or a happening in which you have a part to play may trigger a desire of which you have no idea. For example, a gentleman in Quebec, Canada kept making roads and working on a farm for 30 years, not knowing for what -- for it was destined to become our Canadian Ashram.

90. Guruji, please tell us about 'Attachment'.

Sri Sri: Why do you want to get rid of attachment? Because it gives you pain, right? Why don't you make your attachment bigger?

It is natural for you to get attached to your children, parents, spouse, friends; nothing wrong with it. However, you should not become possessive. When your attachment becomes possessiveness, then you are troubling the person that you are attached to, and you can bring trouble to yourself as well. So, broaden your attachments. Just as you are attached to your children, you should be attached to other children also. If it is not to the same degree, then it could be at least 50% or more.

91. You and Ownership

Man has a tendency to own things. When he owns something small his mind stays small, his life gets stifled and his whole consciousness is immersed in his house, car, spouse, children and such. A recluse leaves his home and goes far away. There also he starts owning his asana, rosary, books, concepts and his knowledge.

The owning has simply shifted from objects and people to ideas and practices. But a wise one knows that he owns the sun, the moon, the stars, the air, all of space and the Divine in its entirety. When you own something big then your consciousness also expands, and when you own something small then all the small negative emotions start coming up such as anger, greed, etc.

I wonder why people do not feel connected to the sun. The very existence of life depends upon the sun. Perhaps it is the lack of awareness that one refuses to acknowledge and own one's connectedness to the macrocosmic universe. The Rishis in ancient India, the Native Americans and the aboriginals from all over the globe have insisted that you can feel connection to the sun, moon and the directions. When you own something magnanimous your consciousness also becomes magnanimous.

92. Guruji they say, if we remember "Narayana" during death time then all our sins gets washed away. Is this not injustice to all those who do good deeds all life (laugh)?

Sri Sri: People who commit sins have to suffer it. But if you commit sin all life no chance you will be able to remember god in the end. You have got this beautiful path why do you worry about sin. All will be washed away. You do not analyse the garbage in dustbin whether it is today's or yesterday's. It's all gone, likewise forget all.

93. Guruji I always fall in love with wrong person. You are the only right person I fell in love with.

Sri Sri: Listen, Who ever you choose your life partner contribute in their life. Do not demand. Win your in-laws by your service and love. This skill you must learn. I am just here for my family whatever they want I will do it. Go with this sense and even few months will earn you good will. It's not such a big thing. You simply have to remember that you had fights with your mother in past and mother also has been nasty with you and you both would forget it soon. Same you behave with your in-laws.

94. Guruji, can you please explain me what does grace mean?

Sri Sri: It's something, which you cannot explain. When you feel that you got something

beyond your capability then it's a gift. Grace simply means gift. In school there are grace marks which you are actually not qualify to get but teacher gives you out of love (laugh) perhaps can be called grace. It is always accompanied with gracefulness. There you go!

95. Mrityunjaya mantra is supposed to give victory over death.

Sri Sri: Mrityunjaya mantra is one of the most reverent mantra in the Vedic tradition. Markandeya Rishi chanted this mantra. 'Mrityu' means death. 'Jaya' means victory over death. Victory for the soul or the body? Every moment the body is changing. Our body is a township. Like in a town new children are being born.

"Mrityunjaya means victory over the mind, the mind realizes that there is something in me that is not changing. Then there is no fear. Fear is one of the signs of death. You win over the fear. You win over the small mindedness of identification with the perishable and move to the imperishable. We are combination of both: our spirit is imperishable and the body is perishable".

There is a prayer: Let Shiva makes me strong. Let him make me strong. Let him give me relief. Desire to be free from bondage takes you out from bondage.

96. Why is Shiva depicted as Nataraja?

Sri Sri: The cosmos is not a journey to somewhere. Usually people ask what the purpose of life is. Creation is simple a display and play of consciousness. Like the dancer and dance cannot be separated, similarly the Creation and the Creator are not two separate things. This truth was depicted in the form of Nataraja. There is wind in one hand, deer depicts air, fire element, and space element is depicted with a little conical drum (damru). The dance of consciousness is the whole Universe. This universe is celebrating everyday. This truth is brought out. One, who does not know this, suffers. One, who knows that this whole creation is a dance, is an expression of joy, that truth is Shiva tattva.

97. Could you talk on Shivratri and its importance?

Sri Sri: Mahashivratri is the day when the Shiva tattva touches the ground, touches the earth. The consciousness, which is always ten inches above the material ground; the aura, the ethereal world which is ten inches above the surface, touches the earth element on Mahashivratri day.

So, it is very useful for people to keep awake and meditate on that day.

Do not eat too much, eat very light and do more meditation, then it helps in fulfillment of

desires. This is the ancient belief. It helps you to grow stronger in your being. It is like a new year for a saadhak (seeker), for spiritual growth, spiritual attainment and worldly attainment, so it is considered auspicious.

The night on this day, when the constellations are in some particular position, is very auspicious for meditation. That is the ancient belief.

That doesn't mean it doesn't happen on any other day. Any time your heart is open, your mind is calm and steady, prayers do get answered, but Shivratri day is celebrated with the singing of the ancient Vedic chants and a ceremony is done, and it is considered a very auspicious time for a spiritual aspirant.

It is the wedding of the material with the spiritual. The material, which is eight fold, came close to the ethereal, which is also eight fold.

So what the eight fold prakriti (nature)? Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego; all these come in contact with the subtle eight, i.e., the Shiva Tattva.

People usually eat very light, some fruits or something and fast. I don't recommend you fasting without anything. Take some fruits or some light easily digestible food and spend the day awake and at night meditate. You don't need to do meditation all night. Meditate for some time.

We will have satsang and some celebrations. That's it! In fact every day is a very auspicious day because we do satsang every day. In ancient times, people used to say okay, if you cannot do every day, at least one day in a year, on Shivratri day, do meditation and keep awake.

Wake the Divinity that is deep within you. That is the message.

The Divinity is within you, let it wake up!

98. Why to offer milk to Shiva on Shivratri? Why not to donate to poor?

Sri Sri: 1. According to Ayurveda, imbalance of Vata - Pitta - Kapha creates diseases/disorders.

2. In the months of Shravan & Fagun, Disorders related to Vata are very high. Due to weather change, Vata increases in the body. So we should not eat things that increase Vata like leafy vegetables.

3. But the cattle eat only grass & leaves, so in the month of Shravan, the milk they give also increases Vata. So when we offer milk to Shiva, it means

- a. It is not good for health.
- b. It can create viral infections that can make us (or anyone) sick for a long time.
- c. So that we consume minimum milk.

4. Ultimately we are doing it for ourselves. Shiva is taking our problems and taking care of our health.

5. Such a deep science in a simple process, Lucky to born here in a blessed country.

99. We should know that we are a part of a grand universal plan. Our needs will be taken care of, but nobody's greed can never be quenched. Greed is different. Needs will always be taken care of. If you have an intense need and you pray for that, it will come. It may take time, but not always.

100. What is that one primary mantra to success?

Sri Sri: The one primary mantra to success is to digest failure.

101. The Fall That Raise

You only see the fall of the water. You don't see how the Ocean becomes a Cloud; it is a secret, but the cloud becoming the ocean is obvious.

In the world, only a few can notice your inner growth and height, but your outer expressions are apparent.

Never brood that people don't understand you. They can see only your expressions!

102. How to measure success in life? Why don't we reap benefits even after putting a lot of hard work?

Sri Sri: For anything to be successful, you require five elements. Hard work alone will not pay. There should be hard work, blessings, luck, the instrument to do work, and the right frame of mind. If you have all this with you, only then will you be able to do it.

103. Loneliness can only be filled by being alone. If you could be comfortable being alone for some time, then you will not feel lonely. When you don't feel lonely, you can spread joy to people around you.

104. You are the witness and so are we, then what is the difference?

Sri Sri: I do not see any difference at all. You should tell me where it is that you see the difference. I am what you are, and you are what I am. I am in you and you are in me. So I do not see any difference at all.

May be you seeing a difference of qualities. That is, you think that Gurudev has different qualities, and I have different qualities. We are beyond qualities and virtues. Our true nature transcends qualities and attributes.

105. When you demand love, you bruise it. Trying to possess love is like holding a flower by its petals. You crush the blossom.

106. Gurudev, my problem is I doubt my convincing capabilities. I think I can't convince people, especially for this lovely Art of Living course, which is so superb. What should I tell them?

Sri Sri: No need to try to convince anyone. Even I don't know how to convince people. If you are convinced, that is good enough and if you have the heart that others should also benefit in their life, there should be a smile on their face, everyone should benefit from knowledge that very intention will carry on.

Who doesn't want happiness? Who doesn't want a clear mind? Who doesn't want a healthy body, tell me. Who doesn't want to feel pleasant in all situations? Or have positive vibes in them? Everybody wants it.

So when you are trying to convince somebody, you think they don't want it and so you have to convince them to want it. That's where we do a mistake.

Just live the knowledge, smile and serve. If you want to tell something to others around you, don't be shy in speaking your heart out. That's it.

107. There are things we never want to let go. But keep in mind that letting go isn't the end of the world, it's the beginning of a new life!

108. Faith is realizing that you will always get what you need.

109. Do you really know what is going on in everyone's heart and mind? If that is the case, then what do you do when someone lies to you, or makes lame excuses despite you knowing it all?

Sri Sri: See, I give everyone a very long rope (a good amount of margin or freedom to act). So you do what you wish to do, we will see later what to do about it. When someone lies to me, I do feel bad about it, but then such people soon improve and become better in life.

Once or twice they may lie to me, but then they soon realize their mistake and come running to me and fall at my feet saying, 'Oh Gurudev, I am so sorry that I lied to you'. So you should realize by yourself whether what you are doing is right or wrong.

Once upon a time, there was a very old saint; he had a habit of always praising people, no matter what. People would be surprised on seeing this and would ask him, 'Why do you always praise people, even when they are no good? Why do you only speak about someone's good qualities? Please tell them their flaws also'. To this, the saint replied, 'Your miseries will speak out loud about your flaws and bad qualities by themselves. Why do I need to say that?'

110. When you desire for truth, all other desires drop off. You always desire for something that is not there, but truth is always there! Desire for truth removes all other desires and it itself dissolves and what remains is bliss.

111. They say that there are two kinds of people. The first, are the kind of people who ask question out of ignorance and the second are the people who don't ask question out of ignorance. What would be my category?

Sri Sri: At least this you have realized! See how wise you are! Only a wise can understand such things! So you are certainly not a fool. You are wise.

112. Guruji, it is said that wisdom is to have a smile on your face even in bad times. Should I put on a fake smile? I don't feel very good when I do this.

Sri Sri: There is a proverb in America, which says, 'Fake it till you make it'.

When in difficult times, you experience pain. I am not saying you should never express the pain that you are experiencing, and fake it with a smile, no! If you feel there is a problem and if you feel like crying, cry, but snap out of it.

What makes you snap out of it is knowledge. What does knowledge do? It brings back the smile.

I want to tell you an incident. A lady had lost her teenage daughter and she was in a lot of pain. But with the help of knowledge, she could get over the pain. Then she started going to parties, but it was pinching her. She was feeling guilty, 'I am smiling. How can I simply smile when my daughter has died just a month ago?'

With the help of knowledge, she realized that anyway she had to go, so she went; she was sick and she died. But now when she smiled she felt guilty. She didn't feel any pain anymore for the death of her daughter, and for that she felt guilty. I have seen many people like this. This is where I say, drop all these hesitations and listen to your heart. With knowledge you will be able to smile, and it comes to you naturally. This is the wisdom, i.e., everybody one day is going to die. I am going to die and you are going to die. Everybody will die. That inner strength and conviction (that comes to you when you realize this) will bring back the smile. When smile comes, don't say, 'Oh I shouldn't be smiling!'

Wisdom is something that brings the natural smile within you even in tough times. When everything appears to be falling apart, why should you lose your smile? In everybody's life this happens. Some things that you like happen, some things you don't like also happen. This is part of life. When such things happen, why do you have to blame yourself and get bogged down? Wisdom gives you the strength to smile even in tough times, and that is a real smile.

Everybody anyway smiles when everything is fine. What is the great thing about it? A baby smiles when there is no pain, but an adult can smile even when there is little pain. Wisdom is important in everybody's life. It is wisdom that uplifts you. It is wisdom that makes you smile even in very tough times.

113. The purpose of words is to create silence in the minds of the listener and love in their hearts.

114. Impediments of the Spiritual Path

Two things are detrimental on the spiritual path:

1. Culprit consciousness:

In the past, religion pushed you into feeling like a culprit. It made you think that you are a sinner, you must repent. This sense of being a sinner pushes you down, away from spirituality. It rattles your mind and brings such a sense of guilt deep within you.

Unfortunately, many people lived their lives in guilt and died with this feeling. That guilt consciousness never allowed them to come out of the small mind. People lived without realizing that oneness with the Divinity, that innermost peace and joy.

Jesus said, 'I and my father are one' (implying oneness with the Divine). He never said that you repent, you are a sinner. In fact, Jesus stood against it if someone said that anyone was a sinner. Later on, religious people used guilt as it was very convenient to enroll others.

2. Victim consciousness:

'Oh, I am victimized! I am right and you owe me an explanation. If nothing, at least an explanation!' The mind rattles on being a victim.

Victim consciousness is on the other end of guilt or culprit consciousness. It is another big issue that the human race has fallen prey to.

Both, victim consciousness and guilt consciousness are detrimental on the spiritual path, they make you miserable. Whenever you think you are a victim, you cannot have proper rest. Then you keep crying or getting angry at others.

115. A person who is fully aware can never get angry, nor can he commit any misdeed. All mistakes happen in a state of ignorance, and lack of awareness.

116. The three gunas - Rajoguna, Tamoguna and Sattoguna are an integral part of nature. You just be a witness to their play and display and if you want to explain it to somebody then do it because you care for them, do it with compassion.

117. Knowledge alone has the power to uplift you in this way. Nothing else can help you do this. If there is no knowledge in your life, you will simply keep running from one end to another. Without knowledge, you will get tired stumbling from one thing to another and you will keep getting miserable each step of the way. Being in knowledge and being in Satsang is the only way to save yourself from misery and suffering.

Compared to knowledge, every other intoxication just pales in comparison. Such is the strength and depth of knowledge.

118. When the six layers of our existence become transparent, then we are able to perceive the seventh layer, the self. Could you please talk about how to make the intellect transparent?

Sri Sri: Let us understand what the intellect is? Consciousness functions largely in four different modes, similar to the different modes or functions in a cell phone. The four different modes in the consciousness are:

1. The Mind - The Mode of Perception: Now you are looking at me, I am looking at you. It is the mind through which the eyes perceive, and the mind through which the ears hear. It is the mind through which the nose smells, if there is a good fragrance around; but if your mind is elsewhere, you would not even notice the fragrance. So, this faculty through which we smell, taste, hear, see, touch, is the mind.

2. The Intellect - The Mode of Analysis: Once you perceive, then the mind goes on judging, whether this is good, not good. The understanding of the fragrance; the understanding of the site; the understanding of the sound falling on your ears. This is the intellect. The intellect categorizes, analyses things; saying this is right or wrong, or I like this and I don't like that. In order to analyze things, the intellect needs a third layer, called the memory.

3. The Memory - The Mode of Storage: The intellect is in between the memory and the mind. The mind and the memory together make the intellect function. If there is no memory, the intellect cannot function. The basis of the intellect is memory and perception. The memory captures some deep impressions, that is the limitation of the memory. It captures the pleasant memories, and the unpleasant memories (the unwanted, deep impressions called trauma); all of these are stored in the memory.

4. The Ego - The Sense of Identification: Beyond the memory, the consciousness identifies with something that is ego. Then is the Self - it is beyond the four different functions. It is the reference point of all changes. If you say that everything is changing, you do notice that everything is changing, right? Your body is changing, your thoughts are changing; thoughts form part of the mind. Your concepts are changing, that is the intellect.

The memory is changing, there are certain things you remember, and certain things you don't remember. All this is changing. If you say that all this is changing, there must be something that doesn't change; this is the logic. How do you know something is changing? This is because there is something that is not changing. Now you don't know what this something is! But there is something, some vague thing that is there, and you can feel the changes because of its presence. What is this something? Lord Buddha wanted to know this. He meditated and meditated, and he found that there is nothing! It is empty.

He said, 'I searched and searched and searched for the Self, but I could not find it. There is nothing'. He said, 'Shunya (zero); everything is empty. There is only emptiness; I could not find anything'. Adi Shankaracharya, from the Vedic tradition, came after Lord Buddha.

When Adi Shankaracharya met Lord Buddha, he said, 'Yes, I understand, this is all temporary, everything is changing'. He asked Lord Buddha, 'You said you could not find the Self, but who could not find the Self? There must be someone who was searching. Who was searching? Who could not find? That is the Self!'

With this one logic, Adi Shankaracharya turned around and brought the Vedic culture back into India. The Vedic principle is that everything is full; this is all consciousness. What we

perceive as empty is all bliss. Adi Shankaracharya said that the one who could not find (the Self), the one who is searching for it, that one is Sat Chit Anand. It has three characteristics: Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.

119. The signs of success are a smile that does not fade, confidence that does not wither, and a personality that does not get shaken.

120. The Five Secrets

There are five secrets, which are sacred and are guarded by the subtle beings and angels in this creation. They are:

Jananarahasya (the secret of birth): Birth is a secret. How a soul takes a body, the criteria for selecting the place of birth, time of birth, type of body, parents, etc are all a secret.

Maranarahasya (the secret of death): Death is a highly guarded secret. Death remains a mystery. The process of separation of spirit from matter and its journey from then on is a secret.

Rajarahasya (the royal secret, the secret of ruling): The principles of governing; the principles of maintaining the orderliness in creation is a secret.

Prakritirahasya (the secret of nature): Nature is a mystery. The more you know about nature, the mystery deepens. The more a scientist knows, the more he feels there is much more to know. Science, though appearing to resolve the mystery in creation, has deepened it. The knowledge of particles, wave functions, black holes, the vacuum state, etc have only deepened the mystery.

Mantrarahasya (secret of mantras): The mantras and their effect, influence, method and mode of working are all a mystery. Mantras are the impulses or a rhythm of consciousness, which itself is a mystery.

Usually in the West, a secret is shameful and dishonest. But in the East, it is honored and regarded as sacred.

121. I come from a Christian background and feel the love for Christ reflected in your teachings. However, the Bible says that Christ is the only way.

Sri Sri: Love is the only way. Do you know the Bible was written 70 years after Jesus Christ? There are 72 sects of Christianity, all of which have their own interpretation of the Bible (similar to how there are 32 sects of Buddhism).

If you see the ancient teachings, Lord Krishna also says the same thing, 'This is the only way!' This is an affirmation for people who were there at that time, to be in the present moment.

This is also the reason why Jesus said, 'Those who came before me were thieves'. Why did he say that? He said that because right now you are here, and you are thinking about the past; somebody has stolen your mind. So, he said that to bring the people to the present moment, to wake them up so that they could be - here right now. You cannot misinterpret all these things. Jesus said, 'I have come here not to make peace, but to put fire. To put father against son, mother against daughter'.

If you think this is what Jesus said, then no. This is all with reference to some context, with some inner meaning to it. Jesus would never be unhappy or upset if you did something that would help in your growth; which would make you more loving, which would make you a more peaceful and a better human being.

So, if you practice yoga, meditation, and some people tell you, 'Oh, you are betraying Jesus!' I tell you, it is absolute nonsense. If you meditate, do yoga, and read the Upanishads, why would Jesus get upset? Not at all! In fact, Jesus spent 12 years of his life in India. Jesus can never be against the ancient teachings, especially meditation and yoga; absolutely not. I have written a small book called *Hinduism and Christianity*; you should read it. I have mentioned their how many similarities exist between Hinduism and Christianity. So, doing meditation, doing these practices is not against the teachings of Jesus Christ. If someone says it, they are saying it out of their ignorance.

122. Due to some worldly problems, I want to commit suicide?

Sri Sri: Absolutely not! Before doing this, come to me, seek my permission, then do it! I will tell you from where to jump and how to commit suicide. Don't make this decision on your own. I need you! Why are you losing your life? What do you need, tell me? Bread, clothing, and a home?

I am willing to give all that to you for all your life. You can just sit around. Have no worries and do my work. You will get respect, honor, and knowledge; fame everything that you want in your life. What is the reason that you want to commit suicide? You couldn't get married, that is why? Or because you got married, that is why? In both the situations, I will help you. Don't worry. If you are not married, I will get you married. If you are already married, I will talk to your husband or wife.

What will you achieve by committing suicide? Suicide should absolutely not be committed. All those who feel the slightest doubt or have such a feeling, immediately show them my photograph and tell them, 'Look, don't go without his permission, otherwise you won't get entry up there as well! You will be hanging in between, neither in this world, nor in the

other. Why do you commit such an act? First take permission, get the visa!

123. I am very much aware that there is this enormous spiritual and practical power in women. But I am also aware that this power is very much hidden from us. How can the modern woman awaken this power in her?

Sri Sri: First of all, let us understand that spirituality is not something that is out there, that is going to come into you. We are all made up of matter and spirit.

Our body is made up of carbohydrate, protein, amino acids, etc. Our spirit is made up of compassion, care, commitment, love and distortions of it, like anger. All these qualities. Nurturing the human values, the qualities in you, is spirituality. It is seeing life from a broader perspective, i.e. 'I am not just flesh and bones, but I am scintillating energy. I am a fountain of love. I am feeling. I am intelligence. I am thoughts'.

This identification with our consciousness is what spirituality is. It doesn't take a long time for you to invoke the spirituality inside you. You simply have to see your life from a bigger perspective. Look at this planet, it is huge; unfathomable. From billions of years it has been in existence and what's our life of 70-80 years in comparison to this?

See your life from the context of space and time and you will see how tiny your life is. At the same time, go deep into it. Go deep into meditation and you will find, 'Wow, there is so much energy. I am this beautiful energy. My thought has power, my emotions have power, and I am a part of everybody!'

124. This feeling that you are part of the entire living species is what exactly spirituality is. That connectedness with the entire universe brings you enormous strength.

125. How to go beyond pain and misery?

Sri Sri: "This mind is experiencing the world. Who is miserable? If you say, "Oh, I am so miserable," find out, who is miserable? Who is hot? Who is cold? Who is experiencing pain? Who is experiencing the pleasure? Who is happy? Who is unhappy? Who feels who is intelligent, who is dumb, stupid? Who is this? Who is feeling all this? Who is experiencing it?

Just saying, "Oh, I am experiencing," is not enough! You can say to someone else, "I am experiencing it". You find out! Who is this who is experiencing it?

This question cannot be answered. You cannot answer to someone else, "I am experiencing pain or pleasure". No. If you say that you are experiencing pain and pleasure, it's wrong. It's a wrong answer. The answer to this question cannot be given. It only has to

be found out and you have to find this out yourself. There is no proxy for it.

Who is experiencing this pain? This very question takes you into meditation. This very question is the door for meditation. Any pain can lead you into meditation. Any misery will lead you into meditation. Any pleasure or joy will lead you into this door, into this meditation. Who is the one who is experiencing this? That is all you have to ask”.

126. "Worrying is not being aware of the potential you have. Worrying is not knowing that a big power in the Universe is with you”.

127. Why are we unable to forget the bad experiences that we have had in life? If someone has insulted us, we keep remembering the same incident again and again in life. How can we get rid of this problem?

Sri Sri: Come on, forget about it! Everyone is going to die one day. What is the use of remembering it for so long? Just know that the one who insulted you will die one day, and so will you. Where is the place for the anger or the insult?

You have forgotten that you are going to die one day, which is why you are feeling worse about it. That's it. You know, that is why during the chanting of the Rudrabhishekam, it is said, 'Mrityor-mrityor namaamyaham'. It means, 'I repeatedly bow in reverence to Death; for it frees one from all suffering and misery'.

Then it also says, 'Kalah namaskarah'. It means, 'I bow in reverence to Time, the universal element of transformation which makes all things pass'. So what are you so bothered about?

128. Sometimes I wonder, I have so many unending desires and you keep on fulfilling them. This makes me smile. How to get rid of hankering over desires Gurudev?

Sri Sri: You know your desires are getting fulfilled, that is enough. Be busy in fulfilling the desires of others, not your own desires.

See, what is the significance of the Guru Discipline Tradition? It is for the Disciple to realize that desires are endless. 'Like the waves of the ocean desires keep coming one after the other. That is why I must keep my desires aside and do as per the Guru desires'. When you do this then the mind becomes hollow and empty and you start feeling a sense of lightness. Life then moves beyond joy and sorrow, and all craving and aversion automatically disappear.

This is the only way to remove cravings and aversions.

That is why it is said, 'Na Guror Adhikam, Na Guror Adhikam, Na Guror Adhikam' (There is nothing greater than Guru, there is nothing greater than Guru, there is nothing greater than Guru because Guru is the embodiment of all that is greatest).

So leave everything on the Guru, and surrender to the Guru.

Fulfillment cannot be achieved through desires because if one desire is fulfilled another one comes, and if that is fulfilled another one comes and then the mind keeps wandering between desires. Some desire or another will keep troubling your mind day and night. Do you know, if there is anything in this world that troubles you, the topmost on the list is your own mind!

I am saying topmost because you do not see this. You feel that someone else is bothering you. You think your mother in law is troubling you, or your daughter-in-law is troubling you, or your wife or husband is troubling you. Keep all that as second on the list.

It is your own mind, which is troubling you; there is no other enemy out there. Once you realize this you will understand that it is not the other, all the botherations are of the mind.

129. Who is pleasing whom?

Sri Sri: God created man and the whole world with so many varieties, so many good things. God made so many types of vegetables, fragrances, flowers and thorns, dragons and horror, to please man and keep him entertained. But man got more and more depressed.

God then acted tough and man had to start pleasing Him and so, man kept himself busy pleasing God and he became happier since he had no time to get worried or depressed.

So, when you have someone to please, it keeps you on your toes and you feel happier, but if your whole aim is just to please yourself, you will get depressed.

Pleasure simply brings more craving, but the problem is that we try to get contentment through pleasure. True contentment can only come through service.

130. Gurudev, I happened to meet an American diplomat who has been on the spiritual path for 40-45 years. He said that some saints have visions of a kingdom of God, which is blue. Millions of souls are hovering around to get inside the kingdom of God, but that is possible only through a master. I just wanted to know whether all this is true.

Sri Sri: In the Gita also it is said that, among the millions, only few will walk the path, and amongst the few who walk the path, only a few will come to know me well.

Among these 8.4 million types of species on the planet, human species is only one. After 8.4 million bodies, you get the human body. Just image, 8.4 million bodies! From bacteria, birds, animals, etc., 8.4 million lives later a human life comes. In this human life, few get to know the real spiritual path and among those, the few who walk on the path are the lucky ones. This is nothing new.

Adi Shankara has also said, that the human birth is very difficult to get. After having gotten human birth, then the desire of wanting to walk on the spiritual path, is again very difficult to get. Few people get this and even after getting this desire to walk on the spiritual path, only few get the opportunity to do it; they get the right path.

So many people, who want to walk on the spiritual path get caught up in all these wrong notions that one day the world is going to collapse, or doom's day is going to come and so these people pray out of fear. They get into paths where they are indented with fear and guilt. See, fear and guilt are two things which will never allow you to go deep into yourself and this is what some of the so called (religious) paths do.

Some of the religious paths create this fear of hell and heaven, and other things, and put people into such turmoil of guilt and fear that the mind can never calm down. Meditation can never happen. This is very unfortunate. So even though these people are aspirants, they are not getting the path. This is again a big luck.

These people don't get access to the knowledge: 'Come on, the mind is like a river, what are you holding on to? Don't hold on to it. All the events are gone, drop it and move on. Live in the present moment'.

This knowledge is not available to many people (who aspire to walk the spiritual path). They go on repenting and repenting about the past, feeling guilty, and the mind becomes a mess. Of course they do pray. Their prayers do help, and they get some blessings. Blessings come to everyone, no doubt, but the knowledge, the right path and liberation remains a distant dream for them. Peace does not happen in their life. They sit with the hope that one day they will go to heaven and so these souls get trapped with desires and fear.

They have come to the human life to be free from all this, and think that God will one day release us. But they will have to come back again to work out all these things. Again they will get meditation.

So, a human birth, desires for a path, and the path being available to them (Maha Purusha Sannidho: getting a Spiritual Master), these three things are rare and difficult to get. If you have all three, you are lucky. That is what is said.

But don't worry, you are not hovering around. You are already on the path and you are happy and relaxed.

131. When the tree is full of fruits and you start enjoying the fruits, you forget to water the roots. Water the roots everyday. Be engaged in some seva project.

132. What to do when we love somebody and he/she rejects you?

Sri Sri: Love is the precious thing, you have offered your love and she rejected, that's her problem, her ignorance. You should move on.

133. It is all in your hands, how you view things; what type of intention you put out there, that will come back to you. If you think that everyone is hurting me, then your own intentions will create similar situations again and again. When you wake up and see, 'There is none other than the One, and the One comes to me in many forms. It is all for my growth, for my well being, for my happiness'.

134. Every moment that you spend here on this planet, know that you are for a unique, big purpose, far greater than just to eat, sleep and talk. You are here for a greater cause. Just remember this.

135. Why are we here? When all this is not reality, why are we made to come back again and again to live our lives?

Sri Sri: First, (we are here) to ask this question, and second, to find an answer to it! Many live their whole life without even asking the question, 'Why am I here?'

Wake up, ask this question, and pursue to get an answer. Do not be in a hurry for the answer. The answer falls into your lap at the right time, so keep asking.

No books will answer this question, because this is the question of 'life'. Your life itself is an answer. Every day, if you ask, 'Why am I here?' then all the unnecessary things fall off, and the right things comes up.

However, before asking the question (why am I here), ask, 'what can I do for this world, before I exit? Anyway, I am here!' This may be a better question to soothe you in those moments when you feel nothing is enjoyable, or everything is meaningless.

When you feel sad, depressed, suicidal or unhappy, at that moment you should say, 'Let me stop thinking about myself. Let me see what I can do here. Anyway, one day I must go. Before I go, let me do something good here. Where am I needed? Who needs me? Where can I help out?' These questions can bring some intermittent relief in between. So do some service (seva). When you do some seva, you make others happy, that vibration of bringing comfort to others souls will bring you merit that will help you realize who you really are.

136. Does a person receive the Guru's love as per his paatrata (capacity to receive Grace or blessings?) or is it that the more deserving or capable ones reach you faster?

Sri Sri: There is nothing like it. You have already come to me. Those who have not reached are waiting for you to bring them here.

137. You know, the whole idea that the creation was 'created' is false. Who said it was created? It was never created. A mirage is never created. A mirage is an illusion of what appears to be but is not in reality. You put a pen in a beaker of water, it appears bent. When was this bend created? It was not created. It just appears. So in that sense, nobody created this universe. It simply is. It just appears to be that way. It is not real. When the sun sets, it does not really set. It appears to set. That's all.

138. "I am fed up with my life and want to end it now".

Sri Sri: "Okay, let's do it. Today your life ends and ceases to be yours. From now it's mine, you would be living for me and only me!

139. How does one cultivate maturity in life?

Sri Sri: Perception, observation and expression - these three things can bring you maturity. The way you perceive things and observe things all around you. Wisdom doesn't need time at all. You don't need to become old to become mature. You simply need observation, of not just yourself but also of the lives of those around you.

140. Gurudev, during meditation, what is the benefit of keeping our eyes open by just five to ten percent? In many statues and idols of Lord Buddha, He is often depicted with his eyes half-closed. Please tell us something about this.

Sri Sri: When we close our eyes, we drift into the world of our mind, our thoughts and emotions – which is called the Manorajya (literally meaning the kingdom of the mind). When our eyes are open, we are engaged in the outside world. So when you close your eyes only partially, then the mind neither gets stuck in the inner world of thoughts and emotions, nor does it get entangled in the outside world. Then the mind slowly settles down and comes to a state of rest. This is a very beneficial technique for those who close their eyes and drift off into the world of dreams. It is like a siddhaushadhi (a perfect medicine).

141. A coconut is a symbol of human life. It is a shock absorber and that is how we should be in our lives, shock absorbing. A coconut falls from such a height but it does not break because it absorbs the shock. Our behavior should be like shock absorbers in the society, so that nobody can hurt our mind or emotions.

Our body needs to be hard like the shell of a coconut and the mind should be like the kernel inside, soft and pure white and bringing feelings like the sweet water inside. So this is why they break a coconut in the temple and they keep it to signify, 'Dear Lord, may my life be like a coconut, body firm and mind soft, pure and clear'.

If it is the other way around, body is weak and mind is hard like a stone then you are in trouble.

142. Why do you have two 'Sri's in your name? That's a tricky one.

Sri Sri: Oh, I thought three is too much.

Actually, my name was getting confused with the sitar player. Even big media channels, when Pandit Ravi Shankar passed away, had put my photograph.

Many times, our famous Sitar player got calls to inquire when he was conducting meditation classes. So to save both of us from this problem, we both agreed that I should keep it in this way.

So at a point of time, Pandit Ravi Shankar's name was getting confused with mine and if you put just one "Sri Ravi Shankar", that would be common. So "Sri Sri" could make it a little bit more specific and clear a lot of confusions, which were arising, because many times people think that I am playing sitar and come to my program.

143. Who is the observer? Is our goal to merge with the observer?

Sri Sri: There is no goal; there is nothing to merge. It is there, that is it. Got it? What is there is there. In the present moment it is always there; the witness is there. Who is asking the question that is the witness?

All that you need to do is to know that the mind is getting clogged by desire after desire after desire. This bombardment of desires does not allow you to see the clear sky that you are. So, throw the desires. 'Vihaya kaman yah sarvan pumams carati nihsprah nirahankarah sa santim adhigacchati'.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna has said, throw the desires, and then you get relaxation. Otherwise, there is a burning desire for something or the other, and this keeps you running.

As long as you are running on the treadmill (i.e., after desires), there is no relaxation. Somewhere you have to press the 'stop' button and sit down! This is what we are doing. Running and galloping on the treadmill does not take you anywhere. Time and again, when you relax, you understand the truth. But even that state cannot be there forever. So again another thought, another desire will come.

What does Yogi mean? One who gets one desire in one year. What does Ayogi mean? One who gets a million desires in every moment, every day. So lessen your desires. Got it? Now you may ask, 'How can I lessen my desires? Know that everything is going to finish! That's all. This is Vairagya, and you don't need any practice for this. Everything is going to finish! This one thought is an antidote for desires. Everything is going to be finished. This is meditation. Without vairagya, meditation is next to impossible!

144. I Want Freedom

Sri Sri: What do you want freedom from?

You want freedom from your own mind and so you say, 'I don't want another birth.

'Mind is your best friend and mind is your worst enemy. It sees an enemy in a friend and a friend in an enemy.

Your mind can twist, distort, and create its own hell and its own heaven. So what you really want freedom from is the mind, but you say, 'I don't want to be born again'.

Once you know that it is your own mind that is bothering you, and not somebody else, then that is wisdom and when wisdom dawns then you say, 'I don't mind if I have to be reborn ten times, or a hundred times, or a thousand times, I will come'.

Then you realize life is joy and life is bliss!

145. "Anything that is less than good will not happen! Best will happen to you".

146. What is significance of 'Chaitra Navratri'?

Sri Sri: Navratri means the nine nights. In the nine nights you turn inwards. It is a time for meditation, for you turn inwards, and then come out with creativity. That is the significance.

Chaitra means the beginning of a New Year. So the New Year begins with nine days of turning inwards; prayer, meditation, and chanting. Recognizing the Divinity in the whole creation, and enlivening that aspect.

147. Sometimes you should just wake up and shake up!

You should say, 'Come on! The whole past is gone! Finished! What am I holding on to?' We are walking ahead, but our head is turned backward. You are turning yourself backward, while you are on a conveyor belt that is going forward.

At sometime you have to say, 'Okay, all that happened in the past is finished! Let me wake up! '

You have to keep waking yourself up again and again - this is meditation. Do not crib about the past. The past can never be perfect, and the imperfection of the past is what clings to your mind as maya, illusion. It holds you back from moving forward in life.

The bare fact is that we should simply accept that there are ups and downs in life, finished!

148. Is it ok to fall in love in the student life?

Sri Sri: It will be ok if you fall in love with your studies and books, your career. So that you will not regret in the future.

149. In India we have different New Year day being celebrated across different parts of the country. Please tell us about "Ugadi".

Sri Sri: Today is celebrated as New Year day in India; year 2071.

There was a very pious man, who was a king as well. He lived 2071 years ago. So in India, the years were named after him, from then onwards the years were named after him as Vikram years. So this New Year is Vikram 2071. Before Vikram, the years were named after Lord Krishna; therefore, it is 5,114 years today.

The New Year system is based on the cosmos, it begins when the Sun or the Moon enter the first point of Aries. Today, it is the moon that has entered, then the sun will enter the first point of Aries, which is when we celebrate Vaisakhi, also a New Year day.

So, half of India celebrates with the moon, and the other half celebrates with the sun. There is no uniformity there too; there is freedom for everyone to celebrate what they want. In the states of Punjab, Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, they celebrate the New Year with the solar calendar, i.e., Vaisakhi. In Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and many other Indian states, they celebrate today, i.e. as per lunar calendar. In The Art of Living, we celebrate every day!

On New Year day, the tradition is to eat a little bit of neem leaves, which is very bitter, and

jaggery, which is sweet. It is meant to imply that life is both, bitter and sweet; you have to swallow both, that is the message.

Time gives you both, bitter and sweet experiences. Don't think it's only friends who bring sweetness; friends can also bring bitterness and don't think enemies always bring bitterness, enemies can also bring some sweetness. So, life is a mixture of all the opposites.

Once upon a time, all over the world, everyone followed the same calendar; the Lunar Calendar. Even today, in Turkey and Iran, people follow the Lunar Calendar; March is the New Year.

King George, of London, wanted the New Year to commence in January because he was born in that month. It was his New Year, no doubt, but he imposed it upon the entire British Kingdom! Now, this happened sometime in the Eighth or Ninth Century, but people would not stop celebrating the New Year in April. So King George called it April Fool's Day. He said that anyone who celebrates in April are fools, and that is how April 1, came to be known as Fools Day.

150. Uncertainty

You can be at ease with the uncertainty of the world when you realize the certainty of the consciousness. Often people do just the opposite. They are certain about the things in the world and uncertain about God. They rely on something that is not reliable and get upset. Uncertainty causes craving for stability and the most stable thing in the universe is our Self.

The world is of change, the Self is of non-change. You have to rely on the non-change and accept the change. If you are certain that everything is uncertain, then you are liberated. When you are uncertain in ignorance then you become worried and tense. Uncertainty with awareness brings higher states of consciousness and a smile.

Bharat says: A certain smile!

Often people think that certainty is freedom. If you feel that freedom when you are not certain then that is 'real' freedom. Often your certainty or uncertainty is based on the relative world. To be certain about the uncertainty of the relative, makes you certain about the existence of the absolute and brings a 'certain' faith in the absolute. Nitin says: Yes, to understand this you certainly need to have awareness!

Q: Can we still be enthusiastic when we are uncertain?

Sri Sri: Yes, in knowledge you can be enthusiastic in uncertainty. Often people who are uncertain don't act, they simply sit and wait. Acting in uncertainty makes life a game, a challenge. Being in uncertainty is letting go. Certainty about the relative world creates

dullness. Uncertainty about the Self creates fear. Uncertainty about matter brings certainty about consciousness.

151. Letting go of Control

Many have a problem of letting go of control. This results in anxiety, restlessness and it sours relationships.

Wake up and see, are you really in control? What are you in control of? Perhaps a tiny part of your waking state! Isn't that so?

You are not in control when you are sleeping or dreaming. You are not in control of thoughts and emotions coming to you. You may choose to express it or not, but they come to you without your prior permission! You realize that most of the functions of your body are not in your control, and the same for your life and the whole universe. Similarly, do you think you are in control of all the events in your life or in the world? That is a joke!

When you look at things from this angle you need not be afraid of losing control, because you have none! Whether you realize it or not, when you let go of your sense of control that is when you truly relax. Your identification of being somebody does not let you relax totally and it keeps your domain limited.

152. In one minute, death will rob all of what you have. Before death robs you, let go. Wake up and see nothing is yours. It is such freedom, I tell you! Such freedom!

153. Gurudev, what happens after death?

Sri Sri: What happens after death is the mind gets freed from the body, the spirit. The mind has memory and intelligence, so these two things become like a balloon. The karma, the deepest impressions form a balloon. It is like in sleep.

Death is nothing but a long sleep. Before going to sleep, see the last thought that you get, and as soon as you wake up, see what is the first thought that comes. Have you noticed? It will variably be the same though.

So the physical body decays and the pranic body with all the impressions forms a balloon and leaves the body and hangs around.

Don't imagine a balloon hanging around! It is a light; an energy.

I will give you the best example. In a television station, they conduct a program and then

they transmit it through the dish and the program remains in the atmosphere – it is the same way.

When you send an email from the computer, you type all the letters and then you press the send button. What happens? It goes into the space. Does your email remain in the space till it is downloaded? Even after several days you can download your email. Even one year later or ten years later you can download an email. There is no expiry date, isn't that so. It is not like those greeting cards, which sometimes people send you that expire in 24 hours.

The messages or letters you send don't hang as letters in the space; it remains in the space as energy.

Like that every soul is a particular frequency and every thumb is different because a thumb is like a particular cell phone chip.

So after death, every individual energy stays, and the impressions it has taken, accordingly to that it experiences those stages there, but then after sometime that soul comes back. The soul enters the body at three times – this is all a secret. It is called the birth secret and death secret.

So the soul enters at the moment of conception, or it enters in the fifth month, or at the time of birth. So the three sections are there, but there is no way to determine when it enters.

So if at conception time it comes then what one should do to care for that?

Keep yourself happy. Usually pregnant women are kept very happy in India. Whatever she wants is provided to her.

I would say, don't watch all these violent movies, and scary songs, and scary things. Generally light flute music would be good because it is soothing. It is good to listen to music, knowledge and wisdom. All these things would be preferable.

The soul also chooses where to be born, the place to come. According to its wish it will just come there.

154. Gurudev, does the ego help us to achieve?

Sri Sri: Yes, in the initial stages, then it becomes a noose around your neck. It should be there in the beginning to achieve something, but then you should know how to get out of it also.

155. Is revenge justified?

Sri Sri: Revenge is a sign of foolishness and stupidity. Any revenge shows you have become blind.

156. According to the combination of three Gunas, different states of mind prevail at different times. Don't be bothered by these. Everything comes and goes.

157. Gurudev, it is very easy to be grateful when things are going well. How to feel grateful and be aware of your grace when things are not going well?

Sri Sri: Remember how in the past tough times have become easier. You sailed through the tough times. That will give you the confidence and instill stronger faith in you.

158. There may be some people who bang the door on your face, never mind. Walk away, smiling; that is your ego busting process. See, even if someone does not like you, it does not bother you; it does not matter to you. Move away with a happy and smiling face to the next place.

159. Independence means depending on the inside. You are miserable when you want things from others for comfort. 'I am independent' means 'I am inner dependent', so I want nothing from anybody.

160. How to deal with Humiliation?

Sri Sri: Know that humiliation does not weaken you - it strengthens you.

When you have a sense of belongingness, you don't feel humiliated. The more egotistic you are, the more humiliation you feel. When you are childlike and have a greater sense of kinship then you don't feel humiliated.

When you are committed to truth and not to your ego then you also don't feel humiliated.

If you are afraid of humiliation, you can neither make progress in your material life nor in your spiritual life. When you stand above humiliation, you get closer to the Self - to God. When you are steeped in love, with the Existence, with the Divine, nothing whatsoever can humiliate you.

So, the way out of humiliation is: Get Humiliated!

161. You don't need to worry to maintain knowledge. When knowledge is lodged in you as wisdom, it will never leave you.

162. Guide me to turn to spirituality again and again, because laziness blocks me to do this. Please advice how I can tackle laziness.

Sri Sri: You have four ways to tackle laziness.

Number one, taking a vow, taking a determination - you should take a vow for a limited period of time. Next 20 days I am not going to be lazy. In between, if you become lazy then from that day onwards for another 20 days take a vow again, 'I am not going to be lazy'. Whenever you break a vow, you say from that time you will continue with double the enthusiasm, and double the vigor. That seems to have worked for many people.

Second would be attending to your food.

Third would be to do some pranayama. When there is energy, when there is prana, it doesn't allow you to simply sit and be lazy.

Fourth, check vitamin levels in your body. If D3 is low, which more people seem to be having these days, or B12 is low in your body, then you don't feel like doing anything. Morning you wake up and you feel too tired. This is the sign of vitamin D3 going very low in your body, because we eat all this fast food.

E-series of preservatives from food block the sun rays from getting processed into the system. Though you're in the sun, the D3 doesn't get into your blood stream. This happens. That is why we must avoid all these preservatives, ketchups which has all these chemical preservatives. We should go back to organic natural food. Guide me to turn to spirituality again and again, because laziness blocks me to do this. Please advice how I can tackle laziness.

163. When your consciousness expands, rises, then what comes out of you is unconditional love.

164. Let Love Be

Let love be. Don't give love a name. When you give love a name, it becomes a relationship, and relationship restricts love.

There is love between you and me. Just let it be. If you name love as brother, sister, mother, father, Guru, you are making it into a relationship. Relationship restricts love.

What is your relationship to yourself? Are you your wife, brother, husband, Guru?
Let love be. Don't give it a name!

165. However your past has been, just kick that. Be in the present and move on. You are a bird, you may fall but you have wings; continue to fly.

166. Relax. Even when you are capable and strong, you must know that there is a power that takes care of you. It is so compassionate; it is with you and will always help you. If we just understand this, the insecurity and fear in the mind goes away. Great relaxation, confidence and trust come.

167. Gurudev, why are all my desires getting fulfilled?

Sri Sri: When you desire something, you get it. It is but natural. Just like how in a computer, you press a button and it works, in the same way, when you have a desire in your mind, it surely manifests.

I think this is the first time someone is asking that why it is getting fulfilled. Have you become so accustomed to your desires being unfulfilled? When you become a seeker and attend to your Sadhana (spiritual practices) regularly, you will see that your desires start getting fulfilled automatically.

Then you may ask why it is getting fulfilled and may think it is a bit abnormal. I tell you it is absolutely normal. You will get used to it.

168. Meditation is letting go of anger from the past and all the planning for the future. Meditation is accepting this moment and living every moment totally with depth. Just this understanding, and a few days of continuous practice of meditation can change the quality of our life.

169. Guruji, could you tell us about the Saptarishis (Seven Rishis)?

Sri Sri: The universe has a rhythm called chandas. Everything is in a wave function; the receivers of certain wave functions are known as Rishis. Rishi is a position; it is not the name of a person, and there are more than a thousand Rishis. Of these, seven are very important, and they relate to the seven chakras.

Rishis have been there in every age; there are many stories about them. A Rishi is like the Dean, or the Vice Chancellor of a University. They also underwent training, and then

became part of the tradition.

So, like how you say, 'I am an Alumni of Harvard', or 'I am a Stanford graduate', similarly, there are Gotras. Go means knowledge, and Gotra means, belonging to a particular knowledge group or Rishi tradition. So, just like we have different DNA or blood groups, we have different Gotras or families that come from certain knowledge groups, or Rishi traditions.

170. Please tell us something about Hanuman?

Sri Sri: It is said that the Ramayana is happening in your own body. Your soul is Rama, your mind is Sita, your breath or life force is Hanuman, your awareness is Laxmana and your ego is Ravana.

When the mind was stolen by Ravana (the ego) then the soul got restless. Now the soul cannot reach the mind on its own, it has to take the help of the breath - the prana. With the help of the prana, the mind got reunited with the soul, and the ego vanished. This is the spiritual significance of the story.

Otherwise Hanuman was a monkey, and in those days the monkeys were also very intelligent and very devoted.

Devotees are much more powerful than the master himself. This is a fact. Real devotees are much more powerful than God.

171. Would you please speak more to us about love?

Sri Sri: When you love somebody, don't express it too much in words. Love is like a seed. If you express it too much in words, it can't sprout in the air outside.

There is a problem both in East and West with love. In the East they don't express love at all. They have love, but expression is lacking. In the West it is expressed too much in words. In either way it doesn't grow deep and powerful and strong.

If a seed is buried very deep under the ground, it cannot sprout. If it is above ground it also doesn't sprout. It needs to be somewhere in between.

When you tell somebody, "Oh, I love you so much, I love you so much!" Then all that you have spent is just words. Instead, just be. Don't even tell the person you love them. You will see that love flows in your action, in your look, in your life. Your love becomes very active.

A person who is fully aware - one you may call an enlightened person - will never say, "Oh, Larry, I love you so much!" This they will never say. But in their very look, Larry can feel that love. In their very breath, in their very presence, love simply permeates. Do you see what I mean?

Use fewer words as far as love is concerned. When you hug someone or bring them a flower, when you shake hands or you look at them, or even speak a few words, that person can feel that authentic love in you. You don't have to say, "Oh, I love you!" so much. See that?

172. It is said that Lord Krishna was embodied with all sixteen arts, Lord Rama with twelve, and Hanuman with fourteen. If it is like this, then how can we call Lord Rama as incarnation of God?

Sri Sri: A devotee is higher than the God. This has been said to sing the glory of devotees. In reality, both Guru and disciple is God. To sing the glory of a devotee and to raise the level of a devotee, God himself bends. It is like a father carrying his son on his shoulder, higher than him. If Hanuman was not stronger than Sri Rama, then how would he have helped Sri Rama? It is like the one who is stronger than me can carry my suitcase. Sri Rama also needed help from Hanuman. Same way, God also wants your help. So, we should do work to uplift society.

The one who does work of God, works for the good of society, is also taken care of by the God. Working for the God, for the good of society, is an indication of divinity blossoming in you. So, Hanumanji helped Sri Rama, but he never got into the state of ego or arrogance that he's helping Sri Rama. He knew that such thoughts are only illusionary and he had got that luck to work for Sri Rama. So, he worked under Sri Rama all his life while doing all Sri Rama's work.

173. Make the whole life a game. There is no purpose, there is no aim. Nothing. Just take it lightly, easily. Play the game. That is worship that is celebration.

174. You do not have a duty towards anyone or anything. If you have love and care, you will do what is needed.

175. Joy is not to be sought outside; joy is your original state of being. If you do not mess up your mind, you will naturally be joyful.

176. You walk until you come to the ocean. You don't walk or run in the ocean - you float and swim. Like this, once you come to the Master, seeking, stops blossoming begins.

177. How can I get rid of my sense of guilt?

Sri Sri: When you feel guilty, just chants 'Om Namah Shivaya'. Do some Bhastrika, some Pranayama, and Kriya. Doing 'Om Namah Shivaya' chanting one hundred and eight times also helps a lot. You chant one hundred and eight times, and then relax and meditate. See, new energy has come in you and you have become a new person. That person who did a mistake is gone has packed off his suitcase and gone. Now inside you is a new person. Start believing in the innocence of the present moment. In the present moment, the YOU in you, the 'energy in you' is innocent, okay!

178. How do I give more love to myself?

Sri Sri: You want to give more love to yourself, Impossible. If an ocean says how can I give more water to myself, what can be said? If sugarcane says how can I give more sweetness to myself, what would you say? It is like sun saying how can it give more light to itself? It is impossible for you to give more love to yourself.

In fact you love yourself too much, and that is the problem, you're only thinking about yourself. Start thinking about everybody else, and give love to others. You are 'love' my dear, just relax and reduce your wants. Your wants and your desires are eating you up; you simply relax.

You should have wants. There is no problem if you have your desires, but don't let the desires have you. I don't mind you having desires at the initial stages. Later you find, before the desire arises in you, it gets fulfilled.

179. There is nothing in this world, which is worth your tears. If you want to shed tears, it should be sweet tears of gratitude, of amazement, of love. Crying for something, which is worthless, is worth nothing. Your life is not made for that.

180. "Offer everything to the Master. Your anger, your frustration, all your bad feelings, and your good feelings. When you offer it all, you become free. You become light like a flower. You can again rejoice in the moment. What remains in you is pure love"

181. Guruji, how can we turn thoughts of lack into thoughts of abundance?

Sri Sri: The very thought that you want to do it, means you have already started moving in that direction. Look at what your requirements are and you will see that they will always be met. Whatever you need always comes to you. But do not take it to an extreme and say, 'Let me just do nothing everything come to me', no, that is not correct. You have to put in

your efforts, and you have to have courage. These two things bring you wealth.

There is proverb in Sanskrit that says, 'Udyoginam purusha-simham upayati Lakshmi'. It means that great wealth comes to one who has the courage of a lion and who puts in all his efforts. Therefore put in all your efforts, and be like a lion. Do you know, the lion is the laziest animal? It is the lioness who hunts for the prey and presents it to the lion. The lion just goes and eats the prey. The lioness does the work. The lion does not even do the work of hunting the prey. He is lazy, yet he is the king of the forest and has the confidence. So this is what you need to have - confidence and the sense of majesty of a lion.

Then you must put in your 100% efforts, and that is when wealth comes to you. Do not be feverish about it, just take up a project and do it. Later on, you will see that you will get wealth as well, along with it.

182. What is the Self?

Sri Sri: "Self is not just the mind-body complex. Often people think of the Self as the mind-body complex. This is an erroneous notion. Neither the body nor the mind is the Self. All the yoga you do is for the body. All the meditation you do is for the mind.

Whether calm or disturbed, your mind remains mind. Whether sick or well, your body remains body.

Self is all encompassing: service without attitude; love without reason; knowledge without intellect.

Life beyond time and events is what you are. The only purpose for this body to exist is to make you aware of how beautiful you are, and to make you aware that it is possible to live all the values you cherish and create a world of divinity around you".

183. What is Enlightenment?

Sri Sri: "Enlightenment is beyond seasons like the evergreen coconut tree.

Sometimes the question comes up "What's the use of all these courses? Your behaviour has not changed!"

The Knowledge acquired by a human being cannot be measured or judged by external behaviour. Someone may behave as though they have absorbed all the Knowledge but internally they have not. The reverse is also true: Someone who seems to have not changed at all may have absorbed a lot.

Ordinary people would just look at the behaviour, but the intelligent looks beyond and is amazed by the play of the consciousness (Brahman).

Behaviour affects relationships. Attitude affects behaviour. Knowledge or ignorance affects attitude. Grace brings forth Knowledge.

Your inside is like a tree; in some seasons barren and at other times blossomed. Enlightenment is beyond seasons like the evergreen coconut tree, which yields throughout the year”.

184. The soul is eternal, pure and ancient, then how did it become deluded, that it does not know itself in its true nature?

Sri Sri: This is called Atiprashna, i.e., the question which does not really concern you, and it is too much to ask for.

So why did the first ignorance happen, these questions were never answered. In the scriptures also, it is said that this is Atiprashna.

What are you going to do knowing that? Even if someone will say, 'Okay, this happened two billion years ago', what is the use? What are you going to achieve, or solve by it?

There are many other things to know. First know who you are, and then you can say, how the first ignorance came.

185. All of one's life is spent in preparing to be happy someday in the future. It's like making a bed all night, but having no time to sleep in it. How many minutes, hours and days of your life have you spent being happy from within? Those are the only moments you have really lived life.

186. Students are in Abundance, Disciples are a Few, But the Devotees are Rare

It is nothing great to become God or be God. Whether you want or not, all are already Gods. A stone is also a God. You are also a God. Everything is God, God is already there, but it is great to become a devotee. Do you see this? Everything, whether you want it or not, is already God, but the love, devotion, has flowered somewhere. Where the devotion has flowered totally, the flower has blossomed, that is a devotee. Attraction is everywhere, love is somewhere, but devotion is again rare. Devotion is very beautiful.

A student comes to a Master, Teacher, and Guru with tears in his eyes. There are so many problems, and when he leaves, he is carrying the same tears, but the quality of the tears is

different, it is of gratitude. Still tears flow, but those are of gratitude, of love; it is so beautiful to cry in love.

One, who has cried even once in love, knows the taste of it, of surrender and of devotion and the entire creation rejoices it. The entire creation is longing for only one thing, the transformed tears, from salty tears to sweet tears.

187. Many people want to volunteer. What should we remember while training volunteers? What should I keep in mind as a volunteer for my own growth and for spreading knowledge?

Sri Sri: As a sevak (volunteer), you should remember that even if you get stones in return for seva, it's fine. If someone scolds you or curses you, you remain unfazed. Don't make yourself sad or anyone else sad.

Remember this - you need nothing in return for seva - not even a 'thanks'. Do not say: 'I have never needed anything else, only a few words of gratitude' - you shouldn't expect even that. If you do seva without expecting anything, then that is bliss. If you expect people to praise you or thank you, then the quality of seva goes down.

Seva should walk hand in hand with sadhana (spiritual practices). If one is absent, you will not gain anything from the other. From sadhana you get strength to do seva, and from seva you get depth in sadhana, but remember that sadhana is your first priority! You should make time to do sadhana; you should be smart in managing time. There is no end to work, there is always work everyday. So make time for sadhana.

Make it a rule - if you don't do sadhana, you won't eat the next meal. Promise yourself that you won't eat till you have finished sadhana. Then it becomes a routine. When doing sadhana, say: "let me do a couple more bhastrika breaths, a few more minutes of meditation". If you make your own rules like this, then there is no limit to the strength you will gain. By working, your energy and strength gets spent. Through sadhana, we can regain the energy and strength.

Another tip for volunteers: you should be empathetic to people. When we are doing sadhana or seva, we shouldn't be too proud or too angry. If a volunteer is not sweet in his behavior to people and is always angry, then he won't be able to inspire anyone. Our behavior, our actions, our talk, everything should be inspirational.

Another tip: work should be delegated, and delegate work with trust. Many people don't know how to do this. They try to do everything themselves. If you do everything yourself, keep all the keys and try to control everything, then it won't work. If you want to ride a horse, you can't hold the bridle too loose or too tight. So also you should shoulder responsibility, but at the same time delegate work. This is an important point for a

volunteer.

Remember to do sadhana and meditation while doing seva, and go ahead!

188. Guruji, how can I increase alertness in every aspect of life and how to put tollgate in mind?

Sri Sri: I have given number of methods in book "Intimate note to sincere seeker". There are several reasons for negative thoughts. When bowl movement is not good or if you have constipation then also negative thoughts comes. Second is when we do pranayam negative thoughts doesn't comes. Third is when we do exercise and when body circulation becomes more then thoughts doesn't come much. If prana Shakti is less then also it can affect mind. Even after doing all this still negative thought comes then be witness.

189. Guruji how do I ensure that I make no mistake?

Sri Sri: Aah.... Leave it... Don't bother too much. "bigad bigad ke banda khuda banjata hai". But this doesn't mean you take it for granted just because I told you (laugh). Take middle path.

190. Guruji when you were kid how were you? I want to know more about you?

Sri Sri: Yes I was the same as I am now. Little bit of body changes are there but from inside I am still the same.

191. Guruji what is the cure for doubt?

Sri Sri: Doubt should be only little like a salt in food. If too much then it becomes disease. Pranayam will help.

192. What is the best way to deal with any kind of injustice?

Sri Sri: Sometimes what you think as injustice may not be so from the other person's point of view. It may not be injustice at all.

You need to stand up against injustice, but with wisdom and with awareness, because everyone who gets annoyed or angry they will always say, 'I am resisting the injustice'.

Behind the flame of anger, there is a cry for justice, or a demand for justice, but when you analyze, go deep into it, it may not be correct at all. It may not be right at all.

So that is why I would say, you should first analyze from a calm mind, and then take a stand against injustice.

193. The world appears imperfect on the surface but, underneath, all is perfect. Perfection hides; imperfection shows off.

194. Different Types of Samadhi

"A single cell becomes the whole body. Somewhere it is nails, somewhere it is nose and tongue but all is a manifestation of a single cell. In the same way, the entire universe is made up of a single substance.

Remembering and feeling that everything is made up of one thing heals the body and mind and balances the doshas in the body (vata, pitta and kapha). This is savitarka samadhi. Savitarkasamadhi means equanimity with logical awareness.

Deep sleeps can be jada samadhi (equanimity with inertia) and hence, sleep is the main factor in healing. Even medicines will not help without sleep and rest.

Samadhi with ecstasy has no logic. This is nirvitarka samadhi, awareness with bliss.

Nirvitarka samadhi is even beyond the experience of bliss, indefinable beyond words".

195. Don't make a mistake by pointing out mistakes

What is the use of pointing out a person's mistake that they know they have committed? By doing this, you will only make them feel more guilty, defensive or resentful, and this will only create more distance.

You should only point out the mistake of a person who does not know, but who wants to know.

Do not point out the mistake of a person who knows but doesn't want you to know. Often people know the mistakes that they have committed, but they do not want you to tell them.

Before pointing out the mistake of a person, see whether your comments in any way will help to improve the situation, foster love or bring harmony.

A magnanimous person would not pick on the mistakes of others and make them feel guilty. However, they would correct them with compassion and care, not through words but through attitudes.

196. Gurudev, are you God or are you a great human being?

Sri Sri: Listen, whoever I am, first you should find out who you are?

I am far but you are very near to yourself. So first know that which is near to you, and then try to know that which is far!

First contemplate upon, 'Who am I?' and then think about me. When you truly realize who you are, then you don't need to understand anything else, and then you will automatically understand who I am also.

There must have been a similar question in Arjuna's mind also. But before he could even ask that question to Lord Krishna, the Lord answered, saying 'In whichever way one perceives and worships me, I reveal myself to them in that very form'. Why did Lord Krishna say so? Lord Krishna says, 'this is because I am hollow and empty, I am nothing. When I am nothing then whoever sees me in whichever form that is dear to them, I appear to them in that way'.

Many of our saints have said the same thing. They have said that one should be as simple and easy as water. Just like water takes the form of a vessel in which it is poured, in the same way, our consciousness should also have the same quality.

197. Gurudev, where do negative thoughts come from? If they come in me, does that mean I am negative or bad? I refocus on thoughts again and again, but they come back. I judge them, I don't like them and I think about judgment, but I am not able to get rid of those? What should I do?

Sri Sri: Now, there is a problem. You chase them and they come to you multiplied. Just give them a tight hug and you will suddenly find they have disappeared. They are scared of your hug, but they are fond of you chasing them. So, they come back again for you to chase them again, again and again.

If too many negative thoughts are coming, reason is lack of circulation in you. Do a lot of exercises. I think you have too much free time to sit and think. If you keep yourself busy, less of negative thoughts will come. If you are constipated, for sure you will have negative thoughts. So, set your bowel movements correct. That will also help you. If vatta, pitta or kapha imbalance comes, then also you will have too many negative thoughts. Ayurveda herbs will help for that. You can take 2-3 triphla tablets in night, and something to soothe your nervous system, like shatavari. These herbs calms and soothes the system.

The company you are in can also affect the mind. Companies of people, who are negative, can also affect the mind.

One last thing that affect is time. Certain times, certain planetary positions and certain cosmic energies can all affect your mind. But all this will pass. Don't be paranoid about anything. Just know that time moves on.

198. Strange Ways of Karma

Karma is the impression in the consciousness. The impression draws similar situations, events and actions. So karma has three things:

One is the latent karma.

It is karma as an impression Karma as an action, and Karma as a result.

You look at a banana. Looking at a banana is karma. It is an action, and you want to eat it because you know that you have eaten it before. That is the impression of the banana. It is karma as an impression. Then you crave for it. That is a result of it. That's also karma. Looking at it, wanting to have it, craving for it, and, in fact, really eating it is also karma.

Action is out of conscious decision. Reaction is out of impulsiveness. Impulsiveness creates a chain of Karma. Reaction, as well as non-action, both creates karma, but a conscious action transcends karma. Conscious action does not create new karma whereas, non-action can create karma.

For example, a soldier shooting in war does not create a karma; a policeman using tear gas does not create a Karma, and if you are a doctor and you do not give medicine to a patient in need, you are incurring a karma.

Karma in Sanskrit means deed or action. It includes actions that we do, not only through our body, but also through speech and mind. Karma is also referred to an echo of the past and is also said to create the future. Common acts like going to work, good deeds, charity, etc. are also referred to as Karma in general.

Strange are the ways of Karma. The more you understand it, the more amazed you become. It brings people together and separates them. It causes some to be weak and some to be strong. It makes some rich and some poor. The entire struggle in the world, whatever it may be, is the bondage of Karma.

It cuts across all logic and reasoning. There are so many types of Karma; there is individual karma, family karma, society karma, karma of the nation, karma of time. Karma is enormous. The best thing is, don't sit and worry about Karma, just do what is in front of you, and be spontaneous.

It is better you also don't run after anything; just be!

Know that you will get whatever you have to get. This is a place to just settle in your depth, and be content. Clarity in the head, purity in the heart and spontaneity in action, this is the sutra (rule) we must follow. This will take care of all the Karmas. Bad Karmas will go away when you do meditation, when your intentions are clear.

How many of you have had this experience that without doing any harm to anybody, or anything wrong still people became your enemies. (Many raise their hands) So many! Now tell me, you have not done any big favors and still some people have become your friends. How many of you have this experience too? (Many raise their hands) Look at this!

You have not done any harm to anybody still people became your enemies, and you have not done any good to somebody but even then they have become very good friends. Very strange are the ways of Karma.

That is why it is said that the ways of karma are unfathomable.

'Hone wala karm aur karne wala karma mai bahut farak hai'

Apart from our actions the events that have to happen keep happening. That is why the ways of Karma are very strange and that is why I tell you, keep all your friends and enemies on one side and relax; repose in yourself, and keep your attention on the Divine.

This is what Lord Krishna told Arjuna, 'Samah satrau ca mitre ca tatha anapamanayohsitoshna-sukha-dukhkheshu samah sanga-vivarjitah'

Do not lose the equanimity of your mind. You do not know when and where, what will happen. When a friend will become an enemy and when an enemy will become friend.

One does not know anything in this world. So keep your attention on the truth and perform all your duties sincerely and meditate sincerely.

Every object in this universe is endowed with four characteristics - dharma, karma, prema and gyana. Of these, karma is the most talked about and the most misunderstood.

The Bhagavad Gita says 'Gahna Karmany Gathi', which means unfathomable are the ways of karma and yet it seems to be the only logic to explain this whole creation, its existence and the cycle of life and death.

Karma is beyond all logic and reasoning. The more you understand it, the more amazed you are. It causes people to be together or separate. It causes some to be weak and some to be strong. It makes some rich and others poor. The literal meaning of karma is 'action'. There are three types of karma - Prarabha, Sanchita and Aga I.

Prarabha means 'begun'; the action that is already manifesting and that is yielding its effect

right now. You cannot avoid it or change it, as it is already happening.

Sanchita is the gathered up or piled up karma. It is latent or manifested in the form of a tendency or impression in the mind. Sanchita karma can be burned off by spiritual practices before it manifests. Satsang burns the seed of all negative karma.

Agami karma is the future karma of the action; that which has not yet come and which will take effect in the future. If you commit a crime, you may not get caught today, but will live with the possibility that, one day you may get caught.

Some karma can be changed and some cannot.

When you praise someone, you take on their good karma. When you blame someone you take on their bad karma. Know this and surrender both good and bad karma to the Divine and be free.

Karma is also always bound by time, because every action has a limited reaction. If you do something good to people they will come to thank you and be grateful to you as long as they are experiencing the effect of your action.

It is often asked, "Why do good people suffer?" No good action will yield a bad result and no bad action will bring a good result. This is the law of karma. As you sow, so shall you reap?

Karma is that which propels reincarnation. Why are some people born in a very violent environment and others in comfortable environment? The stronger the impression, the greater the possibility of the next life being according to that. So, often you reincarnate like the person you hate or love. The mind which is full of different impressions leaves this body but the impressions wait for a proper situation to come back. So it is the last thought that is very important. Whatever you do throughout your life, in the last moment your mind should be free and happy.

Getting rid of karma means getting rid of impressions. Some karma can be changed and some cannot. As human beings we have the ability to erase fear through meditation. If you meditate, become hollow and empty, whatever the fear is will just dissolve and disappear. Our perception of suffering, of good and bad, is always relative. God is absolute reality; witness of all. See God as a movie director, rather than as a judge. He has no ill feeling for the villain and no special favour for the hero. Each one is playing his role. Live with the karma and not be attached to it. Awareness, alertness, knowledge and meditation will help erase past impressions. It has the strength to dissolve and destroy any karma and bring freedom to you

Let's talk of one's past karma catching up, how it holds true in the light of modern day scientific advancement, rationality. Karma is the latent tendency in all of us. If you went to

school, studied, all those impressions you had about mathematics, biology, etc, that you make use of in the future. Your life is so many days, years of knowledge, and knowledge is all part of karma. They are impressions, and we walk through the impressions.

Karma is not fatality; it is not the fear of fatality. It is not what we think as the fatalistic attitude.

Spiritual knowledge always relives you from karma and brings freedom. For attaining knowledge the desire for knowledge should be awakened. Now if you ask me, is the desire for knowledge based on one's karma? Yes! But knowledge eliminates karma.

Through knowledge and devotion, transcend all karmas and be free!

199. Karma is not Forever

Every karma has a time period and its result is only up to that time period, whether good or bad. Good karma will affect you only for a certain period of time, and bad karma also can affect you only for a certain period of time; not forever. So even the worst sinner, the moment he sits and his heart blossoms, and he comes into devotion and acknowledges the Divinity, he is already getting free from all the bad karma.

That is why Lord Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita, that even if someone is wicked, when he turns to me with an unwavering mind, he should be considered as a good person, as a wise man; a saint. Like how you treat a saint, that is how you should treat my devotee. Even if he might have done all rubbish in the past, it doesn't matter, because in the present, he is free.

"See, when the mind is bitter, you can't find happiness anywhere in the world. When the mind is sweet, then you find sweetness everywhere. So meditation is all about finding sweetness deep inside.

That something, doing which, your vibrations become very joyful, positive and peaceful, is Meditation".

200. Karma, In Christianity they say gives it to Jesus.

Sri Sri: Lord Krishna also said gives your mind to me. What bothers you is does hip. I did it. An intense devotion to divinity can relieve you of it.

Like a captain saying. Take responsibility. Teamwork needs a leader. Head gives decision. An owner of biz gives decision, you do this, and if everyone puts their mind no work will get done. Board takes decision, we are responsible it takes.

Those days Jesus and Krishna said it like that.

That does not mean you can commit more sins. Sins between one Sunday mass and the other.

201. Lord Krishna says, 'I remain untouched by all karma and its fruits'.

Think of a person who is sitting on a train and looking outside the window. The scenery from the window keeps changing, but this person simply sits and watches it all go. Stations keep coming one after another, yet this person is simply sitting, observing it all. He does not interfere in the changes that are happening outside.

He does not say, 'Oh, this scenery should not be there'. He knows that saying this is of no use because it will not change what is happening outside. So in this way, he sits and observes everything with a sense of apathy.

Lord Krishna says, 'I observe everything (all actions) with a sense of apathy, as Nature keep doing about its job. I am not attached to anything that happens because I know the nature of the three Gunas (Satguna, Rajoguna and Tamoguna). It is me who has created these Gunas and their nature. They operate as per the Divine laws designed by me. So when they are functioning as per the laws that govern them, why should I interfere in their function? So I remain detached from the play of the three Gunas and simply observe everything that happens'.

There is consciousness deep within every person. Everything is operating because of this consciousness, which is why, whatever we do; we are also a witness to that action as well. (This is because it is the consciousness that is the source cause of all action). There is this feeling that it is all just happening.

Whenever you do some very good work, you feel, 'I did not do anything. Everything simply happened on its own (through me)'.

How many of you here have had this experience? (Many in the audience raise their hands). For example, you achieved a great task and everyone praises you for completing it, yet you feel that 'I did not do anything. It all happened on its own. It is God who did everything (meaning to feel a sense of non-doership)'.

Have you ever felt this way?

202. "If a wise man's actions hurt you, know that it is for a good reason. If a friend hurts you, know that some karma is getting released. If an ignorant person hurts you, show compassion. They can only give what they have. These three attitudes can make your

whole personality shine!"

203. I feel the fears and pain of people connected to me, do you feel it and bear it, and do you carry our karmas?

Sri Sri: Nature of good people, we put others first, wisdom is not to take the pain deep inside. If the pain is self-inflicted, then feel pity and compassion.

Some people, elders, are regretting the past. We cannot be like them, it is their karma. Take that attitude.

When someone is sick you go and give medicine, you force if still they do not, leave it.

Most of suffering is foolishness, or by circumstances.

Like in Syria or Iraq.

Centuries of wrong indoctrination, selfishness, me me me. Enjoying at the cost of millions. Wrong interpretation of scriptures. Killing in the name of God. Spanish Inquisition. Millions were killed I trying to convert people to their religion. This century at least we should be compassionate with wisdom.

If you are generous people will misuse your generosity. So wisdom and compassion are necessary. People want to only take and do not give. In india people beg as a profession. People are given houses, they rent it out.

Sensitive and sensible both are required.

204. Gurudev, I am in a situation in which I am neither able to forgive nor forget. Please guide me what to do?

Sri Sri: Then just think about your death, that you are going to die. Even if you hold on (to the situation), still you will be finished; you will go away from this world. Now, do you want to carry that impression? Come on, wake up!

Life is so short and everybody is like a rag doll. They don't have a mind of their own. Everyone is like a rag doll, and there is a particular force and energy that is working through everybody. That one Paramakaranakarana is the cause of all causes. The Shiva Tattva is playing, putting different things in different people's minds. Understand this Advaita knowledge; feel it.

We are all made up of the same substance.

All these little minds are there, but the mind is also influenced by a big mind, and according to karma. So, different people act in different ways.

Have you noticed that sometimes, you haven't done anything wrong to anyone, and still they became your enemies? How many of you have had this experience?

Especially people to whom you have done a lot of good to, they become your enemies. You wonder, this person is my best friend, I did so much for him, and this person became my enemy! Isn't it?

In the same way, there are some people to whom you have not done any special favors, yet they have become your friends, hasn't this happened?

You met someone in the train and then they came out and helped you so much.

So both, friendship and enmity happens with some strange law of karma. That is why friends or enemies are all same, because another power is working through them. Knowing this, relax.

Similarly, when you do good work, there are people who criticize you. There are people who do horrible work, and there are some people praising them as well. You find it so strange. So, drop them all and relax.

205. Do children pay for their parent's karma?

Sri Sri: Say your parents make a lot of property and you enjoy that. So when you enjoy their good actions, you also enjoy their bad actions. There is also a way to get over it. Meditation, Chant Om Namah Shivaya. Do some charity for the poor people. Then all pitru dosha will go. Have good feelings for them. They are ancestors - thank them. We do disha paranam in course. It is so powerful. A portion of your meditation reaches to that side. That is why sometimes when people sit for meditation; they do not feel anything at all. It is like paying back a debt.

206. There are many girls being raped in India. Is this all because of karma?

Sri Sri: The law has to become much stricter. You can't just say because of karma. 90% has happened in the influence of alcohol.

207. How to get rid of negative karma? How does it come into existence?

Sri Sri: I want to ask you a question. When the lights were not on in this room, there was

darkness here, right? When the lights came on, where did the darkness go? Did it go to that room? Did the darkness escape through the window? Got it?

In the same way, if negative karma is there, there is little darkness; there is no light there. Put the light on, it vanishes.

How to get rid of negative karma? By meditation, service and knowledge. Serve the needy. Know that it (the negative karma) does not touch you; a shadow does not touch me.

The world is full of differences; arguments are inevitable. With forbearance, patience and wisdom, skillfully make your way up.

208. Gurudev, sometimes I feel guilty for not feeling guilty. If I don't feel guilty will the laws of karma have any effect?

Sri Sri: You don't need to worry about it. You don't have to force guilt on yourself. Actually the case is; deep inside you are feeling guilty. But you are trying to brush it off, and this is what the problem is. If you really don't feel guilty, you will not feel guilty about not feeling guilty at all. It is because you are feeling a little guilty, and you are trying to push it away, which is creating a conflict in you. So what you need to do is, simply accept it.

Accept the mistake and whatever you need to do for remedial measures, you do it. Once you accept the mistake and want to do some remedial measures, then you will find peace within yourself. But if you brush off the mistake and act as if it never happened, or you didn't do it, it is then that the prick starts from within. So the first step is to accept, and then to do some remedial measures. That is it, and then it is done.

209. During seva today I killed many mosquitoes. What about my karmas?

Sri Sri: When animals pray for food then it is not called violence. It is their dharma. Similarly there are thousands of bacteria dying in your body everyday. What is done for survival or safety is not called violence. Violence is the act you do when you get jealousy, hatred & greed. Otherwise you know you breathe in and out you kill many germs. You stop breathing? Even in bhagwat geeta Krishna says you are doing your duty. It's not sin. Even if you think it is a sin then I am there it takes away your sin.

210. Can you please talk about karma and how it works? I always question about babies who die young or die in the womb.

Sri Sri: Karma is unfathomable. It's very deep. Too big to explain. But karma means the cause for any action. No event can happen without a cause. This is simply a scientific

theory. There need to be cause for every result. For any effect there is a cause. That's why kriahna said in Geeta "gehna karmano gati". Don't waste your time and ponder over it. There is no need to go into it.

211. What is Karma Yog? Which is more powerful, karma yog or fate?

Sri Sri: What you do, do with passion that is karma yog. Like in life you can do any work like a karma yogi or a karma yogi. For example, if you are a school teacher, then you should ensure that the knowledge reaches each and every student. If you are not a karma yogi then you will think why to bother about the students when you are getting your payment properly. When you do any work 100% then you can call yourself a karma yogi.

212. Fate is more powerful or karma yog?

Sri Sri: If you do your karma yog, then fate will support you. Fate is what you have gained till now and fate is what you can make. Do good deed in present, it will be help and support you in future.

213. Does karma play a role in how much knowledge we receive from you? And how much of your physical presence is bestowed on us?

Sri Sri: Yes, it depends on karma and you can also change your karma! It is not written in stone, Karma can definitely be changed.

214. I feel grief due to the behaviour of my close ones around me. What can I do?

Sri Sri: When someone is giving you too much grief just knows that everything is gonna finish one day. See that the person has some small brain and it is coming up with some opinion and its wagging their tongue and rattling your eardrums.

Guruji but what if they keep saying non stops then?

Sri Sri: Then, it's their nature. Dogs will keep barking! They will not say meow!

If someone is continuously doing, then be relaxed, that is their nature. If it's once in a while then it's a source of concern. See! If you didn't have the problem you wouldn't have come to me! Accept people and situation as they are.

How many of you have this problem? (Many raise their hands)

Think that in my life there is karma to have a dog in my life!

Once in one of our host's house they had a small puppy because they did not have a child. But after some years they got a child and due to this they had to give antidepressants to the dog!

Because they started to feel that the dog has sibling rivalry! So they took dog to doctor. Everyone Laughs.

215. We have to bear the consequences for bad karma from previous lives. How do I know, whether the problem I am having right now is a result of karma from my previous lives or this life?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to sit and dissect it? They say 'Gahano Karmano Gati', the ways of karma are unfathomable.

If something good is happening, then you must have done something good. If something bad is happening, then you must have done something bad at some time. Maybe that was a year ago, or ten years ago, or even lifetimes ago. Why do you bother, just keep them all aside and simply meditate, be in the knowledge, and do some service.

You have been given such a wonderful path, why do you want to sit down and count your karma. Just follow the path and the karma will automatically get washed away.

When you are disposing your garbage, you don't look inside and see if it's yesterday's garbage or day before yesterday's garbage. Garbage is garbage, you simply dispose of it. In the same way, just let your old karma be, they will turn to ashes on their own.

216. I sometimes have no control over our actions, which is due to my past karmas. Can I change this through Sadhana?

Sri Sri: Absolutely. Sadhana, bhakti, seva, satsang, if all this has no effect than what is the point of doing all this. If everything is destiny then what is the use of all this. If you say the medicines won't work then why will you take it? When you know that the medicine will work, then you will take it. So all the meditation, sadhana that we do, definitely have some effect, that is why we do it.

217. There are the only two things that make life more fruitful - how much love have you given? And how much knowledge have you taken? You may earn millions of dollars, but you will have to leave it here. But what you can take with you is knowledge. What gets imprinted in the consciousness is knowledge. Knowledge is not what you read in a book, but it is

awareness.

Only Grace can burn the bondage of Karma.

"Strange are the ways of Karma. The more you understand it, the more amazed you become.

It brings people together and separates them. It causes some to be weak and some to be strong. It makes some rich and some poor. The entire struggle in the world, whatever it may be, is the bondage of Karma. It cuts across all logic and reasoning.

This understanding will lift you from getting stuck to the events or personalities and help you in your Journey to the Self.

Question: So a thief can say it is my karma to steal?

Sri Sri: Then the police have the karma to catch him too!

Only human life has the ability to be free from Karma and only a few thousands aim to be free from it. Only through Grace can the bondage of Karma be burnt. Performing actions cannot eliminate Karma".

218. Guruji, how do I come out of the victim consciousness, especially when past memories refuse to leave?

Sri Sri: The fact that you have realized this itself means you have come out of it. This is where the karma comes into the picture. Something happened in the past, it was to happen and so it happened. Accept the past and don't brood over it, move on.

Suppose you have committed some mistake, you have insulted somebody and that person holds on to it for so long, even after you have asked for forgiveness from them a million times, what do you do if that person still doesn't forgive you? Somebody has been wrong to you and you also have been wrong to someone. Don't you seek forgiveness and move on? You don't want someone to hold on to your mistakes for your whole life, isn't it? If the person forgives you, moves on, understands your position, how do you feel? See the other person in the same way.

You being in victim consciousness and having rage and anger, does it help you any way to carry on your life? Absolutely not! Waste of time, waste of your potential and life. So we must forgive, forget and move on. You hurt someone in the past and somebody hurt you, that account is closed now. Finished! There was some problem that has to come, and that has come and our own foolishness made it happen. Now it is finished and move on. This is the line of thinking that you must adopt and that makes us feel better.

219. Why did God create good-looking and bad-looking people? Is it a result of their past karma?

Sri Sri: Now, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. You think somebody is bad looking? Ask their mother or their grandmother. They never think their children are bad and, what do you mean by good-looking and bad looking? How long can you stay? The most good-looking, after sometime don't look so nice.

It is not in the outer appearance, it is the spirit, the inner soul. Look at the spirit inside, there is inner beauty. That beauty of the spirit is undying. It increases day by day. It increases with age also.

Wisdom and maturity bring so much beauty. Beauty is not just some appearance.

Similarly, ugliness is not out of appearance. Somebody may look very good with good makeup, but if their heart is very ugly and the mind is all twisted and full of negativity, however nice they may appear, their vibrations will tell you that they are not beautiful. Yes?

So, it is the mind that makes one beautiful.

220. Guruji, if God in the end is the doer, then how come a living being is responsible for karma, or results of action?

Sri Sri: See, doership goes with enjoyership. If you are not the doer, you are not also experiencing the consequence. You can't say, 'I am not the doer; God made me eat more food but I am having a tummy ache'. I would say, 'God is having the tummy ache. Where are you in the middle?' If you have eaten, you have the tummy ache; if God has eaten, then the tummy ache is also for God. It is not you who is suffering from indigestion. Do you see what I am saying?

I think we have misinterpreted this whole philosophy. Every individual has a certain amount of freedom, and certain things are beyond his power. Life is combination of both, your free will and what is destined. Some things are in your control and some other things are not. You cannot say that nothing is in my control, and you can't say that everything is in my control either, both are incorrect. For example, you have no control on whether it rains or not. However, if it is raining, whether to get wet or not, is in your control. Raining is destiny, but to not get wet is your free will. Put on a raincoat or take an umbrella and you will be dry.

221. I have been involved in misbehavior. This one gets me into depression. My family is also suffering. I keep thinking about the past and can't get rid of it.

Sri Sri: What is the surety that you will take my advice and do it. Common drop it. Some karma some action. Why to keep thinking about it. Every action happens because of 4 things.

1. Because you had some intention.
2. Because someone else wanted it.
3. Neither of you or someone wanted but it happened.
4. Both wanted it and it happened.

It's useless to sit and think of past. Just move on. Mistakes have causes pain and pain has given you depth.

222. Guruji, I have been told that a human soul can often take one to two million years to find liberation. Is it true that by doing Kriya and meditation every day, this liberation can be obtained even in one lifetime?

Sri Sri: Everything works with some strange karma. You must lift your eyes and look into this realm. There is a beautiful couplet that says, 'This world has all the wealth, all that is needed, but one who has no karma, cannot get it'. So, whether you get something or you don't, it all works with some strange karma. Recognition, money, power, relationship, health; everything depends on some law in creation. When good times come, you're worst enemy starts helping you, and when bad times come, even your best friend behaves like an enemy. All these things happen due to some very strange karma.

An intelligent person doesn't get caught up in all this. He still keeps putting in his effort, and keeps moving on. You do whatever is needed to put in an effort, and then you leave it. Do you know Lord Krishna went three times to stop the Mahabharata (narrative of the Kurukshetra War) war?

When someone asked Lord Krishna, 'If you knew that the war was going to happen anyway, why did you go three times for peace negotiations? All three times your peace negotiations failed, then why did you go?' That is a very valid question.

Lord Krishna said, 'If I had not gone, then the question would have come that you could have done peace negotiation, why didn't you do it?' You have your duty towards your karma, whatever you need to do, you do it! Suppose the peace negotiation would have succeeded, then the whole Mahabharata would have finished, and the Gita would never have come! The immortal song of the Divine (Bhagavad Gita) would never have come into existence!

So, very well knowing that the Gita had to come, and the war had to happen, still Lord Krishna went for peace negotiations. This is because it is in our dharma, our nature. We should keep putting in our efforts and not get attached to the consequences or the results. This is very subtle because the mind gets stucked into maya 'illusion' in some form or the other.

The mind needs to be hammered into knowledge. It can easily slip out of these four pillars of knowledge, Viveka (discrimination), Vairagya (detachment), self-control, and honoring what you have (not grieving about what is not) and then, wanting liberation! So keep on hammering the knowledge back, again and again!

Suddenly, you will find it is all there, anyway. Now, when you slip, and then also remember that is another level. Knowing all this, suppose you still get caught up (in maya), then don't feel bad that you got caught up; even that is part of nature. Don't say, 'Oh, I did not apply knowledge!' or 'Either someone else is wrong, or I am wrong!'

Whether unpleasant things are happening or pleasant things are happening, I am a witness to it and my mind is getting caught up in it, even that is a part of the happening; I am witness to that also. This is how you rise above the situation! You have to practice pranayama, meditation and knowledge for a long time. The whole life itself is a practice, and when you practice with honor, and then this knowledge becomes well founded in you.

223. In the Puranas, it is said that Lord Vishnu's secretaries, Jaya and Vijaya, were banished because they stopped the Rishis from meeting Lord Vishnu. Do people have to bear the karma even though they are doing the right thing?

Sri Sri: Mythology has many dimensions. The anger of a good person is also beneficial, that is what was depicted here. When the heart is in the right place, even anger is good. For example, if a mother is angry at her child because he is pulling a wire repeatedly, then the anger of the mother is good for the child to be on the right track. I don't think there is any child who has grown up without the scolding of its mother. Is there anybody here who can say that they did not get any scolding from their mother? It is essential, so mothers should not feel guilty. Just do not overdo it, that's all, otherwise it loses its effectiveness.

224. 'I made a mistake and feeling guilty or I didn't make a mistake and being in denial - are both wrong! So accept mistakes and learn from it and move ahead. Suppose if someone keeps reminding you of your mistake and telling it again and again, then will you feel like getting closer to that person? No! Then you also don't do that with anyone! Explain them what their mistake is. Don't let him or her feel guilty. Otherwise the person who erred will keep on doing the same error. You have to relieve that person from his guilt consciousness. Tell them to get over it and move ahead. It's ok. Be simple, easy going and straight forward with these things. Not sick or bothersome'.

225. The understanding that the Divine's presence is pervading in the universe will free you from all the fears and anxieties.

226. Guruji, what do I have to do to be your daughter in my next life?

Sri Sri: My daughter! Let love be love, don't give it a name. All relationships are temporary but love is eternal so just be peaceful and believe that I am yours. The day I was born I declared I am yours and saying this I have come along that I am yours so you also know that I am yours. There is nothing else. Just be happy and bring happiness to others. With love you can win over everything. So put all your effort.

Every person is living life according to their understanding, not everybody can live life your way. Everyone has their own ways and they all beat their own drums, sometimes in tune and sometimes out of tune. When they are playing out of tune, just be a little patient and pray that they start being in tune and you will see that it will happen. It's all about time.

When time is good then even your enemy becomes your friend but when time is bad then even a friend starts acting like an enemy. This you must keep in mind, and if you remember this then no one can disturb you. So, it is not difficult to change your bad time to good times. That will happen with meditation, prayer, surrender and chanting of mantras. Listen to the mantras 'Om Namah Shivaya' or 'Om Namo Narayana', keep listening to it for a little while and see how the situations and environment changes, just say Jai Gurudev!

227. These practices bring so much inner comfort. If I do a lot of practice, will it make me more happy?

Sri Sri: Don't do too much of practice. Move ahead gradually. Do only as much as needed. Do that much to which your body gets accustomed to.

228. Gurudev, how to deal with failure? No learning or advice is helpful in that state of mind. What do I do?

Sri Sri: Remember that you're going to die one day. You are going to leave everything behind. All your degrees, awards, necklaces and diamonds, everything will remain here, of which you've been so possessive. So when you know that one day you have to leave everything behind and go, you'll say, 'Failure, okay failed, what to do? I offer that to the Divine as well'.

Remember that every failure is a step towards success. It is a learning process. You should see it this way perhaps. There are only two situations: either you win or you make others win. You should be proud of making others win.

When elders play with children at home, they don't always win, sometimes they make the children win and feel happy in their happiness. So making others win is a sign of a big mind. Finding joy in the happiness of others is a sign of a big mind.

There is a beautiful story in the Ramayan. In the chapter called Bharat Milaap, when Bharat meets Ram, both of them forget their Sankalpas (vows).

Ram says to Bharat, 'I'll do whatever you want'.

Upon hearing this, Bharat is overcome with happiness and emotion. Ram had left the kingdom to keep his father's vow and he had himself vowed that he would not return till 14 years had passed. If he were to return on Bharat's request, he would be accused of breaking his vow and Ram took his vows very seriously. He believed in 'Praan jaaye par vachan na jaye' (its okay if I lose my life, but may I never break my vow).

So, Bharat on realizing that Ram, who valued his vow more than even his own life, was ready to break his vow for him and said, 'No brother, you please carry on as you wish'.

So it is said that their minds got swapped. Ram's mind went to Bharat and vice versa. This is what we call a sign of love.

It's a very unique story where there is no desire for oneself. All these are ideals. These ideals help in preventing us from deviating from our principles.

229. Gurudev, how do we judge whether somebody loves us truly?

Sri Sri: From whomever you receive love; just know that it from the Divine. You are getting love from the one supreme energy. Your affection is also toward that one energy only, and you are simply receiving its love through this person or that person. Know this and relax.

Whether that person is true or false, right or wrong, don't fall into these traps of the mind. If you get sunlight through the window, then you know that the light is coming from the sun. It is not the light of the window. So just understand this much and relax.

230. Guruji, why is it that many times we do not trust our own people?

Sri Sri: One could be because you know him very well. That is why you do not trust or you do not consider him as your own and that is why you do not trust.

231. When I prepare for my exams I set my goals of what to study and how to study, but I always get distracted and study half the time, what do I do Guruji?

Sri Sri: In-between studies take some time to relax, listen to music. Eat proper food; sometime it is the type of food you eat. Junk food can also block your mind. Have confidence that everything will be okay - this is number one, then prayerfulness - the best will happen to me, and then proper food and rest, pranayam and yoga - all this will help.

232. Guruji, sometimes I get overconfident and sometimes I lack confidence. How do I get rid of this and just be confident?

Sri Sri: You know, you should have some variety. Otherwise it is too boring. You lose confidence only at times, right? That is okay and then you will pray. If you have confidence all the time you will forget to pray also. Nature has a good design.

233. Guruji, whoever meets me ends up pulling my cheeks, what do I do?

Sri Sri: Don't be tense about it; you must be really cute for everyone to pull your cheeks.

234. Guruji, how to control my anger, I am a very short-tempered person.

Sri Sri: First of all you should not put this label in your head that I am a short-tempered person, and then you can improve.

235. Guruji, when someone discourages us or disappoints us then how should we handle the situation?

Sri Sri: Go with more zeal and enthusiasm.

236. How do I get rid of my addiction to computers and other gadgets?

Sri Sri: You want to do it, you can do it. Know that you can do it for the next one week. You will not touch it or spend more than one hour on the computer. Not one minute more than one hour. You take such a vow for one week - I am going to do this - and you can do it.

237. Guruji, when God has enormous power why doesn't he destroy all the bad things at once rather than wait for the time?

Sri Sri: Then what will you do, you will have no job to do. He wants you to have some job to do my dear!

238. Hate and Blame

For every action of ours, we should look within our self. If you are blaming something, it means that you cannot be without it.

Generally, you will see, if someone is very bad, you will just move away from them. But when you hate them that means, there is a deep connection that you are unable to get away from.

You want to be with them, that is why you start disliking them.

239. How to be Good Manager

Remember one thing, the one who manages this universe does not make it so obvious that he is doing it; or that He is in control.

Similarly, manage from behind. Leading from behind is the best. When you want to lead a project you should not emphasize your leadership too much. You should do it from behind.

There is a saying in Sanskrit, Paroksha Priyahi Vai Devaha, which means that the Gods like to do things indirectly and not so obviously.

A person feels, 'I am doing it', but it is the Gods who make them do it. So they give the people the joy of feeling that they are doing it, but in reality, it is the Divine energy that does it in a subtle manner, which is not so obvious.

240. Are Shiva and Shakti Opposites?

Shiva and Shakti are the same, that is why the concept of Ardhanarishwar, who is half Shiva and half Parvati. This is true in all of us; in each one, there is a mother's DNA and a father's DNA; a male aspect and a female aspect, and together you become complete. Physically, you may be a woman, but you have your father's aspect inside of you. Is it that only females are born out of females and males are born out of males? No! Inside each one of you, there is a male aspect and a female aspect.

Shiva and Shakti are one, yet they are different. Parvati means Shakti (the manifest world, i.e., air, earth, fire, water, air, mind, ego and memory), Shiva is the unmanifest. The form and the formless are married; like your mind is formless, the body is form, and they are married.

Yet, it is all just one wave function when you go to Quantum Mechanics; there is no male, no female. However, when you want to have a baby, you cannot say that it is all one Quantum Mechanics, it is different there. When you want to eat food, Quantum Mechanics does not work there. You should know what to eat and what not to eat correct? So, the world of differences and the world of unity co-exist, yet they are different. That is why it is said that the unmanifest Shiva tatva has no parallel, there is no two; it is complete.

As Shiva, as a male energy, (it is) consciousness; then there is female energy, i.e., the manifest universe or the body. When you talk about body and mind, then there are two things, the manifest and the unmanifest. But when you talk about atoms or wave function in Quantum Mechanics, it is all just one vibration.

When you watch television, you see an episode, but if you see it from another angle, you perceive electronic waves. On the other side, you are seeing an episode, and getting some information; they are not opposite. In fact, they are interwoven in nature.

241. You are Pure Electricity

Desires for sense pleasure are electric in nature and they get neutralized as they move towards the objects of senses. If, by your skill, you could move them within you towards the centre of your existence, another dimension of everlasting pleasure, thrill, bliss, and undying love will all be yours. Lust, greed, power and jealousy are also powerful because they are nothing but energy and you are the source of it - the pure electricity. Dedication and devotion keep the purity of your electricity and they move you upward.

Realizing you are pleasure or electricity yourself your craving subsides and serenity dawns. Remembering that you will die makes you alive now, free from cravings and aversions. The wise is always careful not to get entangled and dizzy in the mind.

242. Life is too Short, Life is Eternal

The realization that life is very short brings dynamism in your life. Unwanted things will fall off as well as distractions. When you have to be acting or putting out effort, know that life is short. When you are expecting a result, then you are often frustrated. The ignorant person does it the other way: He hurries for the result and is impatient. Impatience goes away when you know that life is eternal.

When you are looking for a return of a favor from someone or a result from your good deed, you want it quickly. When you realize life is short, procrastination falls away. But when you know that there are many lifetimes, you realize that if you don't get it sooner, you get it later. Wake up and see your life is too short. Time is running so what are you doing with your life? Is it being useful to you and the world around you? Realize life is too short. Wake up! Life is eternal!

When you want to enjoy the fruit of action know that life is eternal. When it comes to hope, you should know that there are many lifetimes. When you are looking for results, know that time is eternal. If someone doesn't thank you or takes advantage of you, thank them because they will pay you back later with interest. So no one needs to feel sorry that they have been taken advantage of or unappreciated. Know that they will have to be paying you back in the future with interest! When it comes to enjoying the fruit of your actions, good deeds or even blessings, know that life is eternal. Anytime that you are in a hurry, you cannot enjoy. So know that life is eternal.

243. How to handle financial burden?

Sri Sri: First of all, don't think it is a burden. Have the confidence that you can make it happen. Burden brings worry, and that will kill your creativity.

244. How do I do the right thing at the right time and not regret later?

Sri Sri: Don't think so much. If something wrong happens, then too it is okay.

This does not mean that I am encouraging you to do wrong. At the same time, too much self-analysis makes the mind get confused. So take the middle path. Don't be too casual and don't analyze yourself too much.

245. See Life as a Game

Today let us do a small exercise.

Look at the person sitting next to you and tell them, 'I do not trust you at all'.

What did you all feel? Did you see that it is so difficult to even say that to someone else? You feel hesitant to say something like this.

I am not saying that you tell the other person, 'I trust you so much'. Instead I am telling you to say, 'I do not trust you at all'. But we are feeling so uncomfortable in even saying that. Isn't it so?

So today, you all did something that you have never done before. You told another person that you do not trust him or her and what happened? The moment you said that, you started laughing and the other person started laughing as well.

Has something like this ever happened in life earlier? No, it has not.

Why is this so? It is because you all took this as a game, nothing more. In the same way, you should also see all of life as a game. That is why we have the word Leela (meaning the pastimes or games of the Divine).

When you see all of life as a Leela, then nothing in this world can shake you, or bring any sort of negativity. When you have this feeling, then nothing will ever be able to dim the light within you.

246. Guruji, it takes effort to start sun salutation but then I start finding intoxication in it. Will you please describe the phenomenon behind?

Sri Sri: Yes, you should do sun salutation. A little effort is needed for a beginner and a little effort is essential to begin with. What is happening with effort? The 'rajogun' or the restlessness in body is getting channelized. The tendencies to act get fulfilled and then what you are left with is simple harmony and that is sattva. So rajogun (restlessness) gets exhausted by your exercise and sattva brings you into meditation. So it's good to put some effort in the beginning and in the end you let go and relax, there lies the reality.

247. Aggression is considered as a sign of power of change?

Sri Sri: If aggression is a sign of change then the world would have changed a lot; where we see signs of aggression. Where ever there is aggression the place has gone back at least 15-20 years. Co-operation is the key, some people think war is necessary for change of governance, but you know for that to happen generations have to suffer. In today's time we don't have to go through that suffering, we are much more intelligent, so we don't need war, we need is awareness.

248. In Art of Living, we teach 5 principles:

1. In life, there are ups and downs, both Pleasant and unpleasant things happen. But we should the balance in life. In happy moments, we either become very happy or we become so angry and down in bad moments. Always, maintain equanimity.

2. Accept others' differences. It could be temperament differences, ideology differences, just accept them and do not resist.

3. We emphasize not to be football of other people, I tell you - no body has time to think of you. See what you are from within and go inside!

4. Don't see intention behind others' mistakes. Inside every culprit, there is a victim inside.

5. Living in the present moment always.

When you apply these 3 things happen: "Purity of heart, clarity of mind and sincerity in action" That's all.

249. Power to Bless

When you become content in life, you gain the power to bless others. This is the law of Nature.

In our country (India) we have a tradition of always seeking blessings from the elderly. Why is this so? It is because they have lived their life and are content. They have reached a stage in their life when they not want anything more.

When you are stuck with cravings and desires, then you do not get the power to bless others. But when you become so content from within and feel that 'I do not want anything', then a great power dawns from with you, and you become able to fulfill not only your own desires, but the desires of others around you as well.

250. When words touch your intellect, it gives you a feeling of knowing it all. You know one line but if you know it through intellect, you will speak ten. But when words touch your heart, there is an exclamation, something is kindled; a wave or a fountain arises and then there is no need for any words.

251. Why does Shanmukha (Karthikeya) have six heads?

Sri Sri: So that he can recite all the Shad Darshanas (six Hindu philosophies) at once. Six faces - this has significance. We say, 'The four directions', North, South, East and West. Brahma has four faces, which means that, he gets knowledge from all the four directions.

But Karthikeya is special, he has six faces. Sixth face is an indication of the sixth sense. It can also be interpreted as, he get knowledge from all the four directions and from above and below. In this way, you can interpret it in any manner.

Then there are six imperfections (vasanas) which trouble the human mind. Karthikeya is there to remove these six imperfections, i.e., Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed),

Moha (attachment), Ahankar (ego), and Matsarya (jealousy).

These six imperfections are removed by the six faces of Karthikeya. These are the six enemies, and these six enemies are eliminated by the six faces of Karthikeya.

There are six Darsanas:

1. Samkhya (strongly dualist theoretical exposition of consciousness and matter)
2. Nyaya (explores sources of knowledge)
3. Yoga (a school emphasising meditation, contemplation and liberation)
4. Vaisheshika (school of atomism)
5. Mimamsa (school of orthopraxy - emphasis on conduct)
6. Vedanta (knowledge in the Vedas)

Then there are six Vedangas (Limbs of the Veda):

1. Jyotisha (astronomy)
2. Chandas (meter)
3. Nirukta (etymology)
4. Vyakarana (grammar)
5. Shiksha (phonetics), and
6. Kalpa (ritual)

These are the six Vedangas and the six Upangas, and Karthikeya is a symbol of imparting this knowledge.

252. Guruji, what does a seeker do when he sees no meaning in sadhana or seva?

Sri Sri: When you feel at a stage there is no point in doing any seva, mind is not even interested in doing sadhana and a sense of dryness has come in life, that's when you pray, 'please take me out of this dryness'. You know, pray to the divine, 'please, I want my life to be juicy, not so dry, depressing and boring. I surrender; I drop my whole being to you'. This inner cry, an intense cry to the divine will make all the difference.

Everybody wants some juicy thing in their life. Just imagine when you have a beloved, how you act. There is so much enthusiasm; there is a feeling of belovedness. That love is what is missing when you feel so dry and completely uninterested; life is uninteresting. At this time have faith and with courage just move on. It is just a passing phase. Usually you call it, 'the dark night of the soul'. The soul goes through such a turbulent time sometimes. Not necessary everybody needs to. At this time continue doing what you are doing.

253. Why is it that even the good things I wish for don't happen immediately?

Sri Sri: The baby cries for milk but the mother takes time to prepare it. Just because the

baby is crying, she will not give it hot milk. She knows what will be ok for it.

254. Why do we develop an attachment for someone?

Sri Sri: Attachment happens when we do not do seva; when we lose our commitment to service. When we do seva then attachments simply disappear.

Keep the desire and commitment to do seva. If you are a mother and you have children, just understand that as parents, you are simply doorways for them. The children have come into this world through you. They have brought their own karma, which they have to go through. As parents, we should serve them and care for them. We should do what is required for them.

But instead, what do we do? We keep worrying and thinking, 'Oh, what about me? What about my children?' In Guwahati, a man came to me with his wife, his daughter and her husband. The daughter went and got married, and so the father came and told me, 'I am going to kill this man (who his daughter married)'. I asked him, 'Why?'

'It is because she has married a person whom I don't like. Now you tell her to leave him'. I told him, 'Sit down'. I made him sit down and explained to him. I told his daughter, 'Give him some time to accept. If he does not accept, then you go ahead and live your life'. What terrible anger he had! And it really seemed like he would do something terrible. He was ready to go to jail, but he was not ready to accept his son-in-law. He asked me, 'If I bring beef and kept it in front of you, would you accept it, and eat it? This son-in-law is the same for me'.

I told him, 'Why are you giving wrong examples to prove your point?' After sitting for a while and explaining things to him, he became calm and smiled. Such situations happen all the time and there is only one way to resolve such conflicts and it is through wisdom. If you want to remove the violent tendencies from someone, then there is no other way apart from meditation and knowledge. We often keep giving all types of advice even when we have not been asked for it. Now give knowledgeable advice and counsel them to bring a change in their mindset. There is a lot that we can do.

Around 4-6 months back, I urged all our volunteers to conduct the Happiness survey everywhere. I encouraged them to go door to door and find out whether people are happy. The interviewer had an amazing experience, and those being interviewed also felt very good. When you do the survey, people feel that they are being cared for, and they feel so good about it.

Some people said, 'for the first time, somebody came and asked me, are you happy? What is the reason for my unhappiness?' One lady in her sixties said, 'In so many years, not a single person asked me, why am I unhappy? Now I feel that there are more caring people

in the world'.

I told the volunteers to find out what were the main reasons why people were unhappy. This forced people to think, why they were unhappy. Many times people are unhappy but they don't even realize why they are unhappy. They get lost in a wave of unhappiness. It is necessary to transform these people and bring strength to them.

255. Ego

When is there Ego?

1. When you don't get attention.
2. When you seem to be losing attention.
3. When you get attention (Laughter).

Ego causes heaviness, discomfort, fear, anxiety. Ego doesn't let love flow.
Ego is separateness; non-belongingness, wanting to prove and to possess.
Ego can be transcended by knowing the Truth, by enquiring "Who am I?"

Often you feel contempt or jealousy towards someone with ego. Instead you should have compassion.

Ego has a positive aspect; ego drives one to do work. A person can do a job out of joy, compassion, or out of ego. Most of the work in the society is for boosting the ego. In Satsang, work is done out of love.

When you wake up and see that there is nothing to be proved and nothing to possess, ego dissolves.

256. "Whatever you gain, you will leave it all here. You will go empty. Keep your head empty. Don't be greedy, but be aware"

257. How can I gain the determination to face a situation? Or should I change my path? How can I know what is my dharma (duty)?

Sri Sri: See, we ask such questions many times. There is no dearth of knowledge about anything we want to know about. Nowadays, knowledge is available at a click of a button. Type your query on Google and you will get everything. But that is not the actual thing. There is something else. What is that? You need to just wake up and realize that everything is going to end one day.

Everything that has ever happened till this day, till this very moment, does not exist anymore. Whether pleasant or unpleasant, good or bad. No matter what happened till now,

no longer exists. It is all finished.

As we go ahead in life, we will realize that everything is going to end. Nothing will remain and yet, we still sit and go on thinking over it, worrying about this and that.

Shake everything off yourself, just wake up and see – there is nothing. Everything is nothing, that's it. This very realization is enough for wisdom to dawn within you.

The nothing that remains is what everything truly is. You need to remind yourself of this again and again, so that it gets instilled in your memory.

After listening to the entire Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna says, 'I remember now'.

What does he remember? That all this is nothing! I am not this. If I was this then I would have ended. I have surpassed all this and moved on, this hasn't even touched me. This we must remember again and again.

Everything is nothing - this is called the Hridaya Sutra (aphorism of heart) as was told by Lord Buddha. This is also what Adi Shankaracharya called as the philosophy of Advaita. All the five elements are nothing. The five senses are nothing. I am nothing. You are nothing. In the language of the knowledgeable, this translates to, 'All this is nothing'.

Devotees say the same thing in a different way – they say, 'I am akinchan' (I am nothing). If you just understand this, great awareness dawns within you.

So whenever something worries you, awaken yourself. Remind yourself that one day we all have to die. No matter how much you decorate and adorn this body, one day it will burn on the funeral pyre.

See every problem as a challenge. Take it as a challenge and see. Then there is no power in this world that can wipe the smile off your face. To know this, how many books will you have to read? What all will you do, where will you go? You don't have to do anything. This is what you are learning - the art of doing nothing!

People have gotten so tired asking again and again, 'What do I do?' And the gurus who keep saying, 'Do this, do that, do this', have grown tired of saying it. So you have to do nothing - just know that all this is nothing.

Now this doesn't mean you sit and keep chanting this. Then it will become a kind of a disease. They have caught a new kind of disease overseas - they call it 'affirmations'. Think a particular thought within you repeatedly. In Switzerland, we had a workshop once and after the workshop we went to a nearby hotel to have some tea and snacks. There, a couple was sitting and they asked me, what I do. I said that I teach meditation. I asked them what they do. They said that they practice and teach affirmations.

A husband wakes up at 3am, sits on the bed and says, 'I love myself, I love myself, I love myself' to himself repeatedly. Does one have to do all that to understand such a simple fact? Our devotees and seekers, who were there at that time, said 'We don't have to do anything like that. We do Sudarshan Kriya and we automatically feel that 'I love myself'. We don't have to say it again and again'. Now you are here in Rishikesh, do you have to remind yourself that you are in Rishikesh? You know where you are. If you say this repeatedly then sometimes doubt comes. Then one may think, 'Am I really here?'

258. Gurudev, what is the purpose of the mind? I only see bondage and sadness associated with it. Do we really need that layer of existence?

Sri Sri: Just let it be! That is the secret to handle the mind. If you try to get rid of the mind, it becomes a monster. If you just let the mind be, it will vanish! When you are not aware of the tricks and the mumbo-jumbo going on in the mind, then life is misery. This is because life is based on the mind.

When you recognize that all this is in my mind (judging people and situations, holding concepts about the self and others); you recognize that you are making a mess of everything in your mind. 'This is how it should be', or, 'It should not be like this', whenever such thoughts come, it means the mind is coming into play; this is all part of the world.

This is where you need to latch onto that non-changing, abstract, invisible energy or power. When you latch onto it, you are no longer caught in the grip of the mind. When we are in the grip of the mind, we make ourselves and others miserable. Look back at your mind, not at others, and see what drama and pain has been caused by it. When you do that, it is no longer pain, it is entertainment. It is like a multi-channel television, a movie channel that has caused so much comedy, suspense, drama, and misery in your life.

This is the reason why all the great saints and poets always addressed their own mind, 'Oh, my dear mind, how fascinating you are, why do you get caught up in so many things! Why do you not recognize that which is so magnanimous, and so beautiful?' Rumi, Kabir, all the great saints, have sung about their own mind. In The Bhagavad Gita also, it is said that the mind is responsible for your freedom and bondage.

The mind is a friend and an enemy. When the mind is your enemy, it ties you down to your past impressions and experiences, because it does not let you see things with a fresh new eye. This is because everything we perceive is through the mind; even knowledge is perceived through the mind.

When the mind is your enemy, it makes you judgmental, brings misery, stiffness and unhappiness. When the mind is your friend, it makes you relax, smile, brings happiness, freedom, and liberation. So, the mind can be our greatest enemy or our best friend.

259. Guruji, what is purpose of life?

Sri Sri: When you feel that everything is going to stay here, but I am going to die one day, and everything appears meaningless,

You can play the Yoga Vasistha CDs and listen to it, or take the book and read it.

You will understand the nature of consciousness; who you are, what you are.

This feeling that everything is meaningless, there is no point, why are we here, why this universe; these questions indicate a very mature intellect. This is the right time to go deep into knowledge. Vedic wisdom will also help you.

It is very fortunate; you should feel very happy that you got this question. Many people don't feel this for a very long time.

So when you feel it, you should think, 'Oh I am so fortunate!'

260. I have never been born, but this body has come for you. There is no other purpose; it is just here for you.

261. How many times a day should you pray?

Sri Sri: It has been said that one should pray 3 times a day. At dawn, 12 noon, and at dusk. However, this is just a suggestion. When you love someone, you cannot say I will remember them 5 times a day.

In the morning when you wake up, before your meals, in the evening at sunset and just before going to sleep, chanting something, remembering the Divine is a great idea.

262. What can be learned from Eklavya, Nachiketa and Abhimanyu?

Sri Sri: Eklavya was one pointed. Nachiketa had steadfastness. He could not be swayed from his goal. Abhimanyu had valour. One who could alone fight thousands of people and all these qualities are already in you. You just need to nurture them.

Don't think about anything you want as difficult. Your mind will want to run away from anything that is difficult. That is the nature of the mind. Understand this. Though if you think about it as a challenge, your mind will readily accept it.

263. How to translate the enthusiasm in thought to action?

Sri Sri: When there is enthusiasm, you cannot sit still. That is the definition of enthusiasm. Don't sit around and think too much. Get into action. Don't become lazy.

Whenever you have something to do (especially studies) get a few people together and do along with everyone. Then if your enthusiasm goes down, there will be others to rejuvenate it.

Dhritrashtra is the one who has to uphold the country. But when he is blind and his wife is also blind, then war and trouble is inevitable.

An alternative path to Enlightenment?

First become an atheist. Negate things. I don't believe in this, that. I don't believe in anything. Which means that you don't believe in what you are saying either and so you believe in nothing and then you suddenly realise that this nothing is actually everything!

So from atheism you will move to Enlightenment. You move to becoming a believer.

264. Gurudev, spirituality has become a buzzword amongst many people. Everybody wants to say 'I meditate, I am spiritual'. What is spirituality?

Sri Sri: We are all made up of both matter and spirit, right? Our body is made up of carbohydrates, proteins, and minerals. The spirit is made up of creativity, peace, love, joy, anger and all these emotions. Spirituality is attending to the spirit; who am I? Am I this body? What are thoughts? What is the source of thoughts? What are these emotions? What is the source of these emotions?

Going to the source of thoughts and emotions, finding that still space in you, is spirituality. Then, you will find that is what everything is made up of!

If you are a Quantum Physicist, I tell you then you are a spiritualist also. You can't separate these two! Because a quantum physicist also says the same thing, i.e., this whole universe is made up of just one thing. He understands this, and a spiritualist says it in with experience, 'Yes, whatever I am that is what everybody is made up of. We are all one. The whole world is one organism'.

This understanding gives enormous confidence, peace and unconditional love. Everybody has a bit of spirituality in them. There is no one on this planet who is devoid of spirituality. In life, events do happen. Either you move through them with a smile, or you grumble, be tense and complain all the time. This is the choice or freewill that you have.

265. Why does the divine answer and reward some while prayers of others go unanswered?

Sri Sri: Well, I don't know why some prayers get answered and some are not. I have no idea. Perhaps it is good for you. Perhaps you may change your mind about what you want. People go to shopping, this often happens at least in India, and ask shopkeeper, "Can I come later and exchange it if I don't like it". They go home and don't like it and get it exchanged next day.

Most unreliable thing you have is your own mind because you don't know what it likes and when it doesn't like that. That is why bringing mind to its source is so important. Its centeredness is the most important thing in spiritual evolution. Understanding what is transient and what is permanent, what brings you permanent joy and what causes temporary convenience and long-term misery, what causes temporary discomfort and permanent joy, and what causes long-term discomfort? That is what is called viveka, sense of discretion, wisdom – knowing this from that.

266. Have you been in a casino before, just for fun?

Sri Sri: I think I create one every evening, where everyone sings and dances and are happy.

267. What would be your best memory of happiness?

Sri Sri: Happiness is when you want nothing, and you want to give. Where the wanting and desires end, and the sharing begin, happiness is exactly there. Memory is not happiness. When you are happy, you forget everything. It is when happiness is gone that you dwell in its memory. In the world, people are either dreaming of happiness or remembering happiness. That is either being in the past or the future. But happiness is that which is in the present and it is your very nature.

268. Guruji, can you reveal the secret power by which you grant a fresh lease of life to someone, such as me, who has been suffering from a terminal illness and is reaching the very end of their life journey?

Sri Sri: See there is will power and power behind a blessing. You can also do it. There are many people who have done blessing course and really able to bless others. When we don't want anything for ourselves, there is a power that can allow us to fulfill others' desires. The main thing is one should not desire anything for oneself. One should be hollow and empty. The desire for moksha is enough, it will be attained.

269. Guruji can you imagine a world without money?

Sri Sri: I don't need to imagine. I've seen it 30,000 years ago!

270. Despite all the developments and the abundance of spiritual wealth in our country, why are the youngsters still yearning to go abroad? India does not seem to them as a place worth living.

Sri Sri: Well, it is good that our people go abroad. There are many opportunities in other countries.

If you observe today, people everywhere are traveling and spreading their roots in different countries. It is only us Indians who are not traveling and spreading our roots in other countries.

What is important is, once we settle abroad, we should not change and forget our roots and our traditions. We should maintain our cultural identity even after moving to a foreign country.

This is what used to happen earlier. Someone would be known by the surname 'Chauhan', but after migrating to another country, he would change his name to Peter.

Someone who called himself as Krishna changes his name to Chris after moving to a foreign country.

So in earlier days, people used to change their names once they moved to a foreign country. It does not happen any more these days. Though I have heard that people who work in call centres in cities like Mumbai often change their names. You should not change your original name. Keep your name and your cultural identity intact.

In China, where there is a predominance of Chinese people, even the signboards are written in Mandarin and not in English. Similarly, if you travel to Vancouver in Canada, in certain areas you will see that signboards are written in Punjabi. This is because the Punjabi people who migrated to Canada to make a living have kept their culture and traditions alive.

Even today, they have constructed and maintained Gurudwaras there. Many Punjabis there have taken up farming as a full time profession and are earning very well, but they do not know to speak in English.

They have not forgotten their language and culture. We need to promote the same kind of sentiment in India also. People in India must feel a sense of pride towards their language and culture. We all need to work towards that.

271. Why would someone tell a lie to their close ones or to their beloved?

Sri Sri: This is a question most often asked by lovers. Since love cannot stand untruth, this causes relationships to break up. The solution lies in understanding the paradox of love and truth.

People tell lies just to save and maintain their love. The fear that the truth might damage their love causes lies to be told between husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend, parents and children and in family situations.

In love you feel weak and truth brings strength. Yet why do people prefer love over truth, i.e. weakness over strength? (Laughter)

No one wants to sacrifice love. Thus people are ready to give up the truth for their love. Love takes the luster out of truth. Sometimes truth can make love bitter while in love even lies can appear sweet, like Krishna's lies to his mother Yashoda!

The truth that does not nourish love has no sense and the love that cannot withstand the truth is not true love. When one is assured that the love is so strong that the truth can neither break it nor cause bitterness, then the truth prevails and love shines.

Truth has judgments, but true love is beyond judgments. Thus true love makes you weak and yet it is the greatest strength.

272. Guruji saying to you "Hi, How are you? Everything okay. Don't worry. I have been taking care of all your worries till date. It will be taken care of in future also. You just enjoy the present".

273. When we undergo lot of suffering, it gives rise to weariness and when this weariness sets in, there is a chance to get cheated by others. How to handle this adverse situation?

Sri Sri: Don't run, stop. We need to move forward with confidence. There is no problem, which you cannot resolve.

Growing weary of everything is not a bad thing, but don't let it take you to depression. It should take you towards enthusiasm.

274. How can I practice forgiveness it's not natural to me?

Sri Sri: All that you need to know is that, the culprit whom you don't want to forgive is a victim. That is all you need to know. You think somebody is bad? Just look into his mind. He

never got the education that you got; he never got the environment to grow the way that you got it. He is ignorant. You can't be angry at an ignorant person! Either he is ignorant or he is sick. Do you get angry with sick people? There are many people in this society who are mentally sick. All this is because their mind is not blossomed; their heart is not purified. Become big, grow yourself into your true Self, bigger self.

275. If the knowledge is so complete then why doesn't everyone follow it?

Sri Sri: They are waiting for you to tell them to follow it. They are only giving you some job to do!

276. Guruji mummy-papa kahte hai Hume nazar lag gayi to ye nazar kya hota hai. Aur ye namak se kaise nikalati hai?

Sri Sri: Salt has a power to absorb negative vibrations. Namak se joh nazar lagi hai woh chali jati hai. Agar hum samundar ke aas paas jake aaye to. Acchha mehsoos hota hai uska karan yehi hota hai ki namak mein negative vibration absorbs karne ki Shakti rehti hai... Woh nazar joh hai woh ek vibration hota hai!

277. When we come to the Guru should we talk with love, respect or fear?

Sri Sri: When you talk to your mother do you think so much before speaking? Don't think so much. Just be natural. Anyway I know what you are feeling no matter what you say!

278. Life is there in plants also then how is being vegetarian different from being non-vegetarian?

Sri Sri: If you look at it there are living organisms even in the air that you breathe and the water that you drink. There is a certain type of food that is meant to be eaten by every animal. Scientifically, this body of ours is made to eat only pure vegetarian food.

279. Are pooja, fasting and God more important or yoga, meditation and satsang?

Sri Sri: Yoga, meditation and satsang is more important. You should do pooja also but not so much.

280. Most people look elsewhere for a perfect relationship, but few look within themselves; at the place from where we relate. What is your relationship with yourself? Who are you to

yourself?

People think, 'Oh, I'm single. I'm so bored being by myself. I need a companion. I need a relationship'. If you are so bored by your own company, think how much more boring you must be for someone else and two people bored with themselves getting together, will completely bore each other!

If your relationship is based on personal need it may not last that long. Once the need is fulfilled, on a physical or on an emotional level, the mind will look for something else and go somewhere else. If your relationship is from a level of sharing, then it can last longer.

When you're looking for security, love, and comfort from your partner, you become weak. When you are weak, all the negative emotions come up and you become demanding. Demand destroys love. If we just know this one thing, we can save our love from getting rotten.

It's the limited awareness of yourself and the limited experience of love that encapsulates you in a tiny compartment where you start suffocating. We can't even handle the love we are asking for because we have never probed into the depth of our own mind; our own consciousness.

281. Worries and Feelings

The head worries and the heart feels. They cannot function at the same time. When your feelings dominate, worry dissolves.

If you worry a lot, your feelings are dead; you are stuck in the head. Worrying makes your mind and heart inert and dull. Worries are like a rock in the head. Worry entangles you. Worry puts you in a cage.

When you feel, you do not worry.

Feelings are like flowers, they come up, they blossom and they die. Feelings rise, they fall and then disappear. When feelings are expressed, you feel relieved. When you are angry, you express your anger and the next moment you are all right. Or you are upset, you cry and you get over it.

Feelings last for some short time and then they drop, but worry eats at you for a longer period of time, and eventually eats you up.

Feelings make you spontaneous. Children feel, so they are spontaneous. Adults put brakes on their feelings and they start worrying. Worrying about anything obstructs action while feelings propel action.

Worrying about negative feelings is a blessing because it puts the brakes on those feelings, preventing you from acting on them. Usually one never worries about positive feelings. Worries are uncertain. Worrying takes away your energy; you cannot think clearly when you worry.

Offering your worries is prayer and prayer moves you in feelings.

When you think you are feeling too much then you start worrying about your feelings. Let's not worry about it and feel our food!

The purpose of knowledge is to make you feel 'I don't know!' If knowledge makes you feel you know it all, then it has not fulfilled its goal. The more you know, the more you become aware of the unknown.

There is one "I don't know" that comes out of ignorance. Then it passes through knowledge and becomes a transformed "I don't know!" This is a beautiful "I don't know" which is a wonder. What is the difference between a wonder and a question? A question is associated with sorrow and restlessness whereas wonder is joy in expression.

282. You say expectations reduce joy. Should we have goals in life? Goal is also an expectation?

Sri Sri: Goals are needed. You set some goals and you keep moving in that direction. Aimless, goal-less life will lead to depression, that aim will make life move in the right direction. I don't mean that you should never expect. Expecting is a part of life. It's just that you need to know that surprises give us more joy!

283. Please say something about spiritual materialism.

Sri Sri: I am hearing a new word today. Well, don't divide life: this is spiritual or this is materialistic. Take a holistic view of life. There is also food in a temple. In that sense both material and spiritual aspects are there. Music is both a form of entertainment and spirituality. We even put ornate clothes on our deities. Ancient people never separated the spiritual and material. They enjoyed putting precious jewels in temples.

In South India, in Madurai, kings gave away most of their precious jewels to the temples. Everything co-existed. In the same way, you can treat work as worship. It is sacred. Spirituality has entered our material life. Action is sacred.

Lord Krishna says, "Janma karma samay divya". All actions are divine. Lord Krishna himself was very much of the material world except for his discourse to Arjuna. All he did was materialistic. He ruled the country, advised as a minister, and so on. Life should not be compartmentalized. Materialism and spirituality are not opposed to each other.

However, money earned through unethical means is never spiritual. It will pinch your heart. The spirit is awake in you. It is your natural instinct. If you have a plate full of food and someone comes to you, you will not be able to eat it alone. It is such a natural part of your life that you cannot renounce one for the other. Every spiritual person has to do charity. You want to be compassionate, but how can you be when you have nothing to give away. Charity cannot happen with an empty bowl.

Narayana is the pinnacle of spiritual life and Lakshmi is the symbol of wealth. Both Narayana and Lakshmi go together. Saraswati sat on a rock. The knowledge that you have gained will always be with you. Lakshmi sits on a lotus, which floats on water. You will never believe what happens in the share market. Wealth is unsteady just as a lotus floating on water. These are the eternal symbols that convey truth. Grasp what is needed. This is very important.

284. Doing Trivial Things

What is that you can do for eternity? Definitely not anything that is big or great because it needs effort and effort tires you. So, it is a temporary state. If you can think of one thing that is way below your capacity to do and agree to do it for eternity, that becomes Pooja. The readiness to consciously do trivial things for eternity unites you with eternity. This is an antidote to ego.

Ego is always ambitious and wants to do the toughest job like climbing Mount Everest etc. Whereas in a simple act like watching a butterfly, watering the garden, watching the birds or the sky, can bring deep relaxation, and relaxation connects you with your source. Not that you do trivial things all your life, but consciously agreeing to do the trivial actions for eternity, opens a new dimension and brings in immense peace and restfulness.

To find rest in activity, choose an activity that is far below your capacity and agree to do it until eternity. Doing a job far below your capacity and being satisfied with it will make it possible to do a job much beyond your capacity. Know that all actions are born out of infinity and that which is born out of infinity can take you to infinity.

285. How to handle blame from close ones?

Sri Sri: First, they are very frustrated firstly. Second, even you are wrong somewhere. You have to change.

286. Should I go for the one who loves me or the one whom I love?

Sri Sri: Choice is yours, blessing is mine. Don't demand love. If you do so, then it starts to

reduce. Don't ask questions. Where are you going? What are you doing? Whom are you talking to? Etc.

287. After how much sadhna will we get moksha?

Sri Sri: Mind is the cause of liberation and bondage. This being the case liberation is possible at any time. It can't be quantified.

288. How to deal with negative people at home and negative environment at home?

Sri Sri: There are two situations when people blame. Either they are stressed or they are very compassionate. You may have some flaws and they are telling you your flaws. So you must thank them. But if they are stressed and criticizing you out of their stress then be compassionate. It is a wise choice to act. Either be compassionate or be thankful.

289. Is there true love in this world?

Sri Sri: Do you love unconditionally? Do not judge others love. If you think their love for you is less then don't ask them silly questions like you love me or not. If it is little less ask them why you love me so much. Take it for granted that they love you. Demand destroys love. Do not demand love. Wherever demand comes love decreasing and don't police each other. When you police them, the screws become loose. Fear starts setting in.

290. Guruji, there is a saying that without the god's blessings even an ant can't move or bite. Then why there are negative things and thoughts?

Sri Sri: Without knowledge of who I am and when you are stressed and unwell. That's why you need ayurveda to purify yourself and meditation. Shiva is in all forms. It is a different level of understanding.

291. All the text ashtavakra, patanjali, narad bhakti sutra, we want to hear the summary of all in your words put together.

Sri Sri: It is the same. Know yourself. Know who you are. After that you do service in the society.

292. Guruji you're working tirelessly. When will you take rest?

Sri Sri: I am already restful.

293. We just heard a song on Tirupati Balaji temple. Can you please tell us the history behind it?

Sri Sri: Within us there are seven hills. These are the seven chakras. The energy that resides in all chakras is the lord of these seven temples. So you needn't go to these places, you can close your eyes and meditate and find god within yourself. When we close our eyes after climbing these seven hills. Then the vibration makes one experience the divinity within us. It is an experience and not a form.

When you climb hills there is pattern, rhythms. Have you noticed that? So your pranayama is actually done. So when you stand in front of the lord, you actually experience divinity. There is good thing in the Internet not just bad. So you need wisdom. Take the good from the Internet. If you have a strong spiritual backing you will make the right choice.

294. Which seva is important - parents, society or god for liberation?

Sri Sri: All three are important. If you ask me should I watch TV first or hear it first. What can I say? Do it simultaneously.

295. If you do intercaste marriage you will go to hell. Is it true?

Sri Sri: No. Only when you do wrong deeds evil deeds then you go to hell. See whom you like and then marry them.

296. Guruji if you get angry what do you do?

Sri Sri: Why are you asking this question? Are you getting angry? If you are asking there must be an intention so you tell me what is your intention behind asking this question.

297. A hundred years of a disease-free body, and stress-free mind seems like a theory. How is it possible in this age to live a hundred years, in a disease-free and stress-free state?

Sri Sri: Have an intention. 100 years does not mean exact 99 years and 12 months, or 99 years 11 months 29 days. Rishis (a renunciate) used to say a 100 years. When people bless, they usually say 'Live 1,000 years'. It does not mean that they want you to live 1,000 years. When you get tired of this life, you say you have stayed too long on this planet. But when

you are connected to the Divine, the natural wish that comes is 'Let me live to the maximum of human life. Let me work till the last breath. Let me live healthily'. These are natural wishes.

298. Do Not Follow Me

Do not follow me. In fact, you cannot follow me, because I am behind you to push you forward!

You have to leave everything behind and move ahead. All your experiences, your relations - everything - is part of the past. Leave the whole world of your memories behind- including me. Drop everything; I am there behind you. Move on. Stop looking for more and be free! Then compassion will flow from you.

Question: When people do not follow anyone, isn't it usually out of fear or rebelliousness?

Sri Sri: One type of Do Not Follow comes from fear or rebelliousness. Another type comes from heightened awareness. You cannot follow me because I am behind you and I am in you.

For long you have been a sheep. Now it's time to be a lion.

299. A lot has been said of Chanakya Neeti and his ways of administration. Is it still applicable in these times?

Sri Sri: Yes, definitely. Chanakya Neeti means skillfully bringing everybody together; that is what Chanakya did. India was fragmented into many small kingdoms, it was Chanakya who united it and made India one huge empire.

In the Arthashastra (an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy), in the rules on economy, he has given many little formulas that hold good even today.

Indian economists have always praised Chanakya, and the skill with which he dealt with every situation. Anyone who is very skillful and very clever, they call him Chanakya here; so, it is a title. It is a state of mind where you want to make progress fast, still be skillful, and take on challenges as an opportunity. Then, you can give the title to yourself.

You could be a Chanakya, if you have all the skills to face all the challenges, and get what you want.

300. Truth is that which neither mind nor words can catch. Only when the mind becomes still, only then can you grasp it.

301. The best way of functioning is to work silently and achieve surely. Success is achieved not by making big noises but by sincerity of purpose.

All those who take pride in their success don't know that there is an unseen force which bestows it, and makes you feel you own it.

302. What are the three types of dhrutis that Lord Krishna mentions in the 18th chapter of Gita?

Sri Sri: Dhruti means that which upholds or sustains life. For many people, the mind goes hay wire; They cannot even sustain or tolerate a small insult. A little bit of imperfection they cannot tolerate.

Sattvic dhruti is that which sustains the mind, life energy, and activities of the senses, that which helps you to be steadfast in your yoga. Not like one day you do yoga and next you go for bhoga. Not like that. That which upholds your senses, your life is sattvic dhruti.

Rajasic dhruti is of the type when I get results then I will deliver. This sort of mindset where your enthusiasm is related to some little reward is rajasic dhruti. It could be related to Dharma or it may not be related. Any work that is taken with the intention of getting results, such as fasting to achieve some results. What is God going to get is you fast?

Tamasic dhruti is one who sleeps a lot. That is most important for them. Nothing else. Very fearful. You look at their face; they are always down, depressed.

If you cannot get married, you are upset. You get married, you are upset. This is tamasic dhruti. Always regretful. That should not have happened. I should have had like that. After 40 years of marriage, they think they should have married someone else and arrogance and one is unable to get of this negativity in the mind. Some people try to get out of it, but they are not able to get out of it. Lazy people, who can sleep anywhere, any time.

In Kerela, I heard about a person that he could sleep at the dining table while he eats. Once I stayed at such a person's home. That person's servant told me that my Master falls asleep while talking! Doctor said lets do a scan. A few years ago, the CT scan was a new machine. He went for the scan. The doctors were wondering why the machine is making so much noise. He slept in the scanning machine and was snoring!

This happens when you do not have any aim in life. Often Ashrams are the base for lazy people. But we do not have this issue. In Ashrams, there is a issue about how to keep people busy. If you keep doing some activity, then you will not get lazy.

One, who is lazy, gets scared easily and then behind fear comes negative thoughts such as who will cremate me when I die, who will take care of me when I grow old.

Some one will complete the cremation rights. Man is mad. If you do not want to leave the madness, then be mad for that which has made all these things not for the things made by him.

Then after this comes vishaad: they think about what happened many years ago and get upset. People will reach Mumbai from Bangalore, and then they will continue to say we should have booked another ticket.

Vishaad has become a habit. A person who is enthusiastic and happy, they will not go into vishaad. Then ego comes. People are in vishaad, often walk with arrogance. Have you seen the people who lost the elections? A wrestler falls and then he says there is no mud on my mustache, where have I fallen? One who cannot come out from a negative mindset. Now we have to see what type of dhruti we have: sattvic, rajasic, tamasic.

How to get out of this?

Do seva, sadhana, and satsang.

Tamas gets converted to Rajasic and then to Sattva.

If you are surrounded by Tamasic people then you will have more of that type of dhruti. Often kids say, throughout my life, no one has done anything for me. The way you behave in front of kids affects kids also. If you are in Tamo guna or rajas guna, then kids catch on to it very fast. Similarly, when four people get together, and one person says something negative and everyone else contributes negativity, then after half an hour when people go home they are so tired.

How to transform from Tamasic dhruti? This path: Seva, Sadhana, satsang, right company. Just like we have sattvic, rajasic and tamasic dhriti we have these three types in karta also

Rajasic - happy only when he gets results.

So sleeping in day time happens when you are living in luxury and don't have any work to do. This problem is there in every ashram. But we don't have this problem because we have everyone working here.

Those with tamasic dhriti show arrogance. Like those who have lost in elections and still are arrogant. They are blaming on each other.

When I am able to control my senses is called sattvic dhriti. But when my actions are bound to time or rewards is rajasic dhriti. That which is bound to some achievement is rajasic dhriti. We do rajasic dhriti for small rewards. It is not for God. This quest for reward

is rajasic dhriti. Tamsic dhriti is related to inertia. People sleep wherever they are sitting.

Bhai, Shok, Vishad - all these are signs of tamsic dhriti. That is too much fear, too much grief, and too much analysis.

Tamsic - he keeps complaining things are not happening and he keeps procrastinating things.

So this sleeping tendency all the time is tamsic dhriti.

Man is funny. He is crazy about things. Instead he should be crazy about the one who made all this.

303. Guruji what is the difference between the mind and the soul? And how is it connected to each other?

Sri Sri: The mind is like the wave and the Soul is like the ocean and the connection between the two is that the mind cannot be without the soul, but the soul can exist without the mind.

304. Gurudev, will the new government be able to eradicate the problem of corruption?

Sri Sri: See, a car runs on all its four wheels. If one of the wheels dislodges itself from the car, the car will not be able to run. It will break down there itself. So you cannot make an imposition that this should happen, or that should happen. All issues and priorities will need to be addressed hand in hand.

When a train runs, it pulls all the train compartments and all the wheels of those compartments together as one. So you cannot give top priority to any one compartment or any one wheel of the train, isn't it?

The issue of black money has its own importance for the country. To improve and boost the economic condition of the country is also another priority.

The situation of the Defense department of our country too is in a very poor state and is another priority issue. So every issue has its own priority, but neither can override the other.

For a hungry person, food is his first priority; for a sick person, health care is the priority. If you only give importance to the healthcare issue of a sick person and do not provide sufficient food to the hungry person, then very soon that hungry person will also fall ill. So all issues have to be addressed together.

305. Habits and Vows

How to get rid of vasanas (impressions)? This is a question for all those who want to come out of habits.

You want to get rid of habits because they give pain and restrict you. The nature of vasana is to bother you, or bind you, and wanting to be free is the nature of life. Life wants to be free and when a soul doesn't know how to be free, it wonders through lifetimes wanting freedom.

The way to come out of habits is vows. This is samyama. Everybody is endowed with a little samyama.

A vow should be time bound. This would bring good conduct and save you from being wayward. Consider the time and place for vows to be taken.

When the mind dwells on useless thoughts, then two things happen. One is that all those old patterns come up and you feel discouraged by them. You blame yourself and feel that you have not made any progress.

The second thing is that you see it as an opportunity for samyama and feel happy about it. Without samyama, life will not be happy and diseases arise. For example, you know you should not eat three servings of ice cream, or eat ice cream every day, or otherwise you will get sick.

Habits will clog you when there is no liveliness or juice in life. When there is a direction for life force, you can rise above habits through samyama.

Take vows according to time and place. For example, suppose someone has a habit of smoking cigarettes and says, "I will quit smoking," but cannot do it. They can take a vow, three months or 90 days; a time-bound vow. If someone is used to cursing and swearing, take a vow not to use bad language for ten days. Don't take it for a lifetime; you will break it immediately. If you happen to break it in between, don't worry. Just begin again. Slowly increase the duration until it becomes your nature.

All those habits which bother you, bind them in vows, in samyama. So all those who are in Satsang, take a time-bound vow today and make a note of it. If you break a vow, make a note of it and share the time and date at the next Satsang. Continue it again. Tie those habits which bring you pain in samyama.

306. I noticed that I am unconsciously always comparing myself with others. Tell me how to stop it please?

Sri Sri: If you are unconsciously stopping it, it will unconsciously stop also. Why do you consciously want to stop? Let it be. Got it? Your trying to stop it consciously becomes a problem. You get stuck. So just relax. Just relax and continue more meditation, more Advanced and Silence programmes. These will de-program you from that thing.

307. Sometimes you think you are speaking the truth but many times you are being harsh. You do not have to be harsh while saying the truth.

Have you noticed, people who are very rude, they ascertaining that what they are saying is truth and it is true, that is why they are rude.

People are disliked for their rudeness and not for the truth. You can separate these two things.

There is an old Sanskrit couplet which says, 'Do not speak sweet lies and do not speak unpleasant truth'. You can be firm and sweet. You do not need to be rough, rude and agitated to be firm. You also do not need to go round and round to be sweet. That is not necessary, just talk straight and sweet.

308. What does Viparyaya mean?

Sri Sri: Viparyaya means the mind making up its own universe, which is very different from what actually is in reality.

You have an inferiority complex and you suddenly see someone's behavior to be very arrogant. They are not arrogant, you are not ill treated by them but you suddenly feel that you have been ill-treated.

You feel that you have not been respected. Because you don't respect yourself enough, you think others do not respect you. This tendency of your mind is Viparyaya.

Others will be shocked with your behavior. They will say, 'what happened to this person?! Till now they were alright. Suddenly they started behaving very funny'.

Have you noticed this? A friend of yours suddenly starts behaving very funny and very rude, and you wonder, what has happened, what I ever did to this person. You do not understand that they are cooking in the soup of their own mind. Why? Not that they are bad or anything. It is just this activity of the mind that is predominant, which is called Viparyaya.

309. Whatever is needed and is best for you only will happen. Remember these two things always. For a devotee only the best will happen. This does not mean you keep rejecting everyone who comes your way thinking something better is yet to come, this is also wrong. Listen to your inner voice.

310. Every end creates a sense of completion and relief, while every new beginning brings a sense of hope and enthusiasm and so, there is celebration associated with both.

311. Desire and Joy

All desires are for happiness. That is the goal of desire, isn't it? How often does your desire lead you to the goal? But have you thought about the nature of desire? It simply means tomorrow, and not now, isn't it? Joy is never tomorrow. It is always now.

How can you have desires when you are joyful? And how can you really be joyful now when you have desires? Desire appears to lead you to happiness. In fact it cannot and that is why it is Maya. What do you say?

312. Why do you think attaining spirituality is necessary?

Sri Sri: It is because you want to be happy unconditionally; you want peace which does not get disturbed by small things and this is quite natural.

Wanting spirituality is as natural as wanting deep rest, as wanting to be loved, as wanting comfort and happiness.

The definition of spirituality in Sanskrit is attaining greatest happiness, attaining greatest freedom (Nirvana). It is natural. Like water flows down, and fire goes up, human beings want enlightenment.

313. If you think nobody loves you, know for sure that you are loved. The earth loves you; that's why it is holding you upright. The love of the earth is its gravitational force. The air loves you; that's why it moves through your lungs even when you are sleeping. The Divine loves you very dearly, deeply. Once you realize this, you will never feel lonely.

314. Would you recommend that I prepare for my goals, or should I just go with the flow?

Sri Sri: Both. You cannot be just saying that I will go with the flow. At the same time you cannot be stuck with a program you made one. Both together are necessary for growth.

You should have a program, you should put your full effort, and then you should also be able to adapt to the situation.

315. How do you bring peace to a relationship with a lot of conflict and arguments? Do you stay in it?

Sri Sri: There are two ways to handle it:

- Move away from that place at that time - because when everybody is angry, things are heating up, everyone goes deaf. Angry people do not listen to anyone. The best thing is move away a little bit and wait for things to cool down.
- Be there, with patience - First, agree with the person, say, 'Yes, I agree with you'.

Suppose your husband or wife is arguing with you, don't say, 'No', say, 'Yes, you are right, I agree with you'. The moment you agree, the temperature comes down. Then in a little gap, as the temperature comes down, say, 'But'. This is the secret. Sometimes people come to me with big ideas. I tell them, 'Your idea is brilliant, very good, but it is impractical'.

Use your skill to calm the situation, and then get across what you want to the other person.

316. If you have a faith that. Only best things will come to you. Then it is enough. Shradha hona bahut jaruri hai.

317. If whatever we do is in search of happiness, then why is there so much pain and misery in the world?

Sri Sri: There is a story of Mullah Nasserudin. His wife was pregnant and the time of delivery had come. But the baby was not coming out. When doctor told this to Mullah Nasserudin, he ran to the market, bought a toy, and kept that toy in front of her wife. He said, "After all this is my child, so he will surely come out with greed".

Whole our life we keep on running behind things with the hope of getting something. We keep on looking for some kind of profit. How would such person experience happiness? Neither does a greedy person get happiness nor does a person who is bombarded with too many desires. The one who in his consciousness is happy? One who is centered, experiences the true happiness. I am not saying there is no happiness in the outer world, but the happiness you get when you go within is incomparable.

The world is running in search of happiness. The body gets baked, the mind gets baked, the intellect gets deluded but still we keep on getting stuck in the same repetitive cycle.

When you meet the Guru, you come to know that you are the source of happiness. Then the mind calms down, and you realize that you are the one in whose search you kept on running here and there.

318. Can the mind continue its process of evolution between lifetimes as well? Does it need a body and situations for its evolution?

Sri Sri: Yes, it needs a body. That is why the human body is very precious. You know, in day to day life, when you do things, sometimes you lose energy. When the energy goes down, the mind also goes down. Sometimes you wonder, why is my mind going down? Many people ask this question.

You think, 'I feel so depressed and down. Nothing feels interesting'. A sort of, (the mind) feeling down, happens to you.

This is because of a few reasons:

One of the reasons is Time. There is a particular time in everyone's life cycle, where for no particular reason the energy of the mind goes down.

The second reason is, too much thinking and too many desires. When the mind is clogged with too much ambition and too many desires, it will definitely give rise to depression.

The mind goes down because it loses all its energy in just thinking and thinking, and dreaming, and wishing for this and that. So too many desires causes the mind to go down. That is why vairagya (dispassion) is essential to counter depression. If you have dispassion, you cannot be depressed. The lack of dispassion causes depression. So too much ambition and too many desires drains your mind of energy, and you feel depressed.

The third reason is when energy is low in the body; when the body is weak. When you do not have much energy, or when you are sick, then the mind goes down.

Associating with the body's vitality, energy and fluids, the mind becomes low. It can happen through some sickness, or because of a wrong diet.

Sometimes you eat some food that does not suit your system, or you eat too much, then also you feel depressed, and this is a vicious circle. People eat more because they are depressed, and then they get depressed because they ate too much.

So, if you feel a little low on energy, or depression, for a few days stop stuffing yourself with food. Eat some light food, or fruits, and suddenly you will feel your energy go up. Don't fast too much, again that is not good. Fasting is good to a certain limit. So, eating light food helps uplift mental energy.

The fourth reason is, total inactiveness. If you are too active, then you get depressed. Or if you are totally inactive, and don't do anything; or do things only for yourself without a mission or a vision to do something for others (lack of a seva attitude), definitely brings depression.

That is why in the ancient days, in the ashrams, people were always pushed to do some service. Go to the slums, sweep the floor, or water the plants, and keep things neat and tidy. Keep yourself busy. If you keep yourself engaged in some activity that is also another way to counter depression.

So, here, either someone who is too outgoing, or someone who does not do any work physically, and sits all the time engaging in mental circus, get depressed. So the middle path is the way to come out of it. From time to time, go into deep meditation, and then come out and dynamically get involved in activity, without thinking 'what will I get from this'. Whatever is necessary to be done in the world, do it. What the time and place requires you to do, doing that, is service. This will also help you to uplift your mental energy.

The fifth thing is, you are all singing, dancing, listening to the chanting, sitting for the Poojas; all this also uplifts your energy.

Now you cannot say, I only want to sit in the Pooja and go on chanting, and do only this. No, it is not going to work. Or, I will eat as much as I want, and then I will come and sit in the Pooja, that won't work. You must always have that balance between activity and rest. The right amount of food, the right amount of activity, and the right amount of service (service is necessary) is essential. When you follow this, then all runs away. When you follow these conditions, then you get united with the universal spirit (Yoga happens), and then sorrow runs away and you smile!

319. Gurudev, I have heard this couplet: 'Sadguru pura je mile, paiye rattan upaar; Mann dije Guru aapne, paiye moksh dwaar' (One who has a Sadguru receives wealth greater than the rarest gems, and one whose heart is devoted to the Sadguru finds liberation effortlessly). How can a seeker surrender himself wholeheartedly to the Sadguru? What does this couplet mean?

Sri Sri: This is what I just explained, isn't it? I gave you the answer even before you asked me this question! (Laughter)

What does a Guru want from you? Just your heart, isn't it? So dedicate your heart to the Guru, and be free!

Giving your heart to the Sadguru means that you feel that 'My Guru belongs to me, and is taking care of everything'. Just have this faith.

See, the mind can get clouded with doubts and a million other thoughts. At first you doubt yourself, then you doubt the others around you, and then you doubt the whole world around you. This doubt slowly consumes your mind.

Doubt is responsible for having destroyed so many happy families. So just drop the doubt. Having total faith in the Guru means just this – 'My Guru belongs to me', and walking confidently in life with this unshakeable faith.

Just believe that - I will get everything that I deserve, and no power can stop that from happening. The One who is giving will give me everything in abundance. Whatever is mine by merit of my karma will surely come to me.

You know, this whole life will end in the blink of an eye. Just look back and see, some 30 to 40 years have just passed by in an instant! So why be troubled about the few 20-30 years more to come? That too will pass by easily.

You will spend half of that time just sleeping. The remaining 10-15 years will be spent in eating, travelling and spending time with your family and friends. So life will come to an end in the snap of a moment. Life is running at such an amazing speed. Just wake up! Realize that you are already surrendered to the Divine.

Do not ask, 'Oh, how should I surrender myself to the Divine?' Just take it for granted that you are already surrendered to the Divine. That's it. There is no point in asking, 'How do I surrender? How do I create or feel that belongingness with the Divine?' There is no way to create that belongingness. You should just feel that 'I already belong to the Divine', that is it. Finished! Do not question that even once.

I feel, we should give this lesson to all the newlyweds also. They should understand how a husband and a wife should interact and be with each other.

Do not go about policing each other. Do not ask your spouse, 'Do you really love me?'

You should not ask such questions to your spouse, even if a doubt comes in your mind. Instead you should ask, 'Why do you love me so much? You love me so much more than what I really deserve'. Then your love grows.

Demand destroys relationships. Any demand on any one person will destroy that relationship. Got it? Do not demand.

You are here on the planet only to give and contribute, not to take. When you take this step, you will see that whatever you need will simply come to you. This is the law of Nature.

When you have this belief that you are here on this planet to give and to serve, you will find that you will receive ten times more of whatever you need or desire. Then whatever it is

that you desire, you will get it in abundance.

You should not get stuck in small petty things like 'I want that person's attention', etc. Do not settle for such small things.

If a beggar approaches you, and asks for alms, what do you usually say? 'Please move ahead', isn't it. You only invite that person to a party who is already prosperous and has everything. Nature also acts in the same way.

Who do you invite home to dinner? You invite someone whose (heart) and stomach are full, isn't it? So you should bear this in mind and not go running after small trivial things like a rat. It ruins your peace of mind, and you end up disturbing others around you also. In fact the entire environment gets spoiled because of that.

Just observe this, if a person comes and sits next to you, or if you sit next to someone who goes on complaining about something or the other, and finding faults in everything, do you feel like sitting with them? No! You feel like running away from them that very instant. You would want to feel uplifted in someone's company, isn't it? Who in the world is bothered about how many medicines you have had, or how much your leg is hurting? Or how your neighbors are troubling you? What is the use of telling such stories to others?

See, life is a mix of everything. There are both pleasant and unpleasant times, and it goes on. Do you think that everything will happen as per your liking only? Will everyone keep praising you all the time? No, sometimes some people may insult you as well. You have to listen to that also. What is so disappointing in that? It is nothing. Be strong and brave.

Life is like a river, and when a river flows, sometimes it is clear and pure, and sometimes some garbage, like dry leaves, twigs and branches also falls into its stream. Life is like that. Such things keep happening in life from time to time.

When you spend too much time in the company of certain people, some problem or other does arise. The more limited and narrow we make our world and our life, that much more our troubles and difficulties will increase in life. So do not stay stuck in your narrow limited view of life, and the world.

Now by this I do not mean you leave your home and your responsibilities. Many people misunderstand such things. They think, 'Gurudev has said to not get entangled in my limited world', so they abandon their duties and responsibilities towards their families. No, this is not right.

Once I was at Paris airport and was passing through airport security. There were a lot of people seeing me off, some 200-300 people. Now this one lady came; she must have been in her late 60's. She came to me and showed me a ring on her finger, and asked me, 'Is this necessary?' I just saw the ring with a stone on it and said, 'No, it is not necessary' and then

I left for New York.

Two days later her husband called me and asked me, 'Gurudev, why did you ask my wife to divorce me?'

I replied, 'I would never say such a thing'. He is a 75-year-old man, married for 45 years. He said, 'No Gurudev, you told my wife that marriage is not necessary, so she has decided to divorce me. My wife said you have given her this advice'.

Oh God! You know, people want something else but they want it to come from my mouth! And both are my devotees. So I told him, 'No, you need not do that at all'.

We so often get caught up in small things. Instead, you should think that if someone comes and sits next to you, they should feel uplifted. You should fill their heart with joy and happiness. This is what you should do. But we end up doing the opposite.

Even at home, when a man comes back from work and is exhausted, his wife will complain and taunt him by saying, 'You did not do this, this is not right, that is not good', etc. So he ends up facing problems at work and also at home.

Ladies also have similar problems. They work the entire day in the house, and if the husband comes back home in the evenings and does not share a few nice words with her, how will she feel? If he just sits reading the newspaper, or stays on the phone for business, then the wife also feels troubled. There needs to understand from both sides, but the main thing is, do not make demands or place conditions for things from your side.

You should have this firm resolve in your mind that whoever comes to me should only go back happier and lighter, no matter what our own condition may be like, because you know that God, or the Guru is there to fulfill all your needs and any lack that you may have, for God and the Guru are one.

You should only think of giving to whoever comes to you. This is the feeling that you should have from within. Remind yourself that 'I have but One Master and everyone else are my children whom I have to serve and nourish, come what may!'

See, life is so short. So be happy at all times and spread that happiness to everyone around you. That should be our aim. Then everything will come to you.

320. Every time you are unhappy or miserable or lonely, you are just coming in touch with your own boundaries. At that moment what can you do? You can just be grateful and pray for peace. That very moment, you will start smiling and however hopeless the situation is, you will walk through it.

321. What is the mantra for happiness?

Sri Sri: Not being stuck in 'me', 'me', and 'me'. Be committed to a cause, then there is only happiness in life. Second, knowing that there is someone who loves me cannot live without me and is capable, also brings happiness life. If we know that there is some power that is capable of taking care of us and is with us all the time, then we will be happy at any time and state.

322. How much money should one earn in life? If we earn more than what we need, does that mean that we are taking from someone else's share of wealth?

Sri Sri: You can put all your efforts and capabilities in your work and earn as much as you can as long as you are within the rules and you don't commit any crimes. The result of earning wealth by wrong means will bring unhappiness. Your conscience will tell you when you are doing something wrong.

323. Every emotion is connected with the breath. If you change the breath, change the rhythm, you can change the emotion.

324. To walk on the path of Yoga, two things are essential: Practice & Dispassion. How to develop these two separately?

Sri Sri: Knowledge takes you towards dispassion, and action results in practice. For practice, we need to do something; we need to do pranayama, meditation, etc. Dispassion happens through knowledge and awareness. Just wake up and see this again and again – Everything is nothing. Before doing anything, there is nothing. After doing anything, there is nothing. So, nothing is really what everything is! You cannot become a true believer without first being an atheist. It is necessary to be an atheist. So first be an atheist.

What does it mean to be an atheist? When one does not believe in anything.

When you say, 'I don't believe in this, I don't believe in that, I don't believe in anything. This is all nothing. Whatever I see is all nothing', and you discard everything, then you will be able to see what is. So you cannot become a true believer without being an atheist in the first place.

That is why in the beginning, don't believe anything. Don't believe in anybody's words. Then, don't believe even in what your mind is saying.

So by negating everything one by one, you arrive at nothing and when you arrive at nothing, you then realize something, 'Oh! This nothing is everything!'

This is the most beautiful knowledge.

In this way, through total disbelief we reach a place of total belief. From an atheist, you become an enlightened. In fact, only a good atheist can be a good believer.

325. What is liberation? Is it attained only after one's death, or can a person be liberated while he is living? Can you please elaborate on this?

Sri Sri: You can be liberated right now, this very moment. For example, today the general elections have come to an end in the country. Just ask the Chief Election Commissioner of the country as to how he is feeling (referring to the feeling of total relief). That is what liberation is. Now he can comfortably go on a holiday for the next six months.

Liberation means that you have finally found rest (and this happens when you are finally free from all your desires and cravings). When the feeling dawns from deep within, 'I am content, I do not want anything', and you have fulfilled all your duties and responsibilities, then you are liberated. Liberation is freedom from desires; liberation is the total contentment that you get when you fulfill all that you had to.

Liberation is soaking oneself completely in devotion to the Divine. When this realization dawns on you, 'I am not the body, I am the eternal spirit. This body will perish but I will remain here forever', then that is liberation.

326. Aol couple aur Non-Aol couple me difference kya hai?

Sri Sri: Aol couple ek dusre ko gyan ka bolate rahte hai. Ek ne kuch galat kiya to dusra usko jagah pe lata hai.

327. Gurudev, what to choose between these two things: life in this beautiful world with a Guru like you, or liberation and ultimate union with the Divine?

Sri Sri: You can have both; this does not have to be a choice. You can have led a happy life in this beautiful world, and you can get liberation also. Main thing is, don't be a football of other people's opinions. Many times, you do things because others want you to do it. No need! Be strong in yourself and see life from a bigger perspective. You don't know who your real friend is; this is the difficulty.

In the world, what has happened, you think someone is your friend and you show off to them, 'Oh, I got this, and I got that', and they are jealous. They are not happy about it. If you show that you are good, and then they are not happy, and if you show you are not good, then also they don't care for you. It's sort of a dilemma that most people face.

If you show you are really good in something, they are not happy, they are jealous and if you don't prove yourself, they don't think you are up to the mark, and so they don't look up to you. So in any situation, it is not worth wasting your time on what those people are thinking about you. Do you get it? Let them think what they want. If they think you are an angel, fine. If they think you are a devil, fine. If they think you are dumb, foolish, or whatever; you should feel, 'Okay, go ahead and think what you want, I don't care!' If you go with this feeling, you will carry some weight. If others think you are a failure, okay, let them think. What big success have they got?

People, who are successful, look at them, they are not happy at all. They are so miserable. See, not everybody is successful in every field. Some are successful in some aspects. So, never mind, success or failure. You be centered, and be happy. Each one of you should remain as a center of happiness. You should be radiating happiness, and when anyone comes to you, give them love, compassion, and happiness. Then we can bring a big change in the world.

I always say, you kids who always doing competitions, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. But if you have done art of living, you don't lose at all. You know why? It is because either you win, or you make others win. When your dad or mom plays games with you, what do they do? They could win all the time, but do they win all the time? No, they enjoy making you win, isn't it? So in the same way, either you win or you make others win. If you are more mature, you make others win also.

328. My faith is shaken by the floods. Can I as an individual help others to overcome this trauma?

Sri Sri: Come on! A flood cannot shake your faith. Then it is no faith at all. Simply know that in every moment of crisis, you will get help and you are helped. There is a power that stands with you, which helps you. That is all you need to keep in mind.

If a torrential rain, or a flood, or a famine can shake your faith, then it is not really faith. It is an incidental concept, that's all. This is the testing time for faith, so keep it.

329. The more you know, the more you come to an understanding you know very little and what you don't know actually increases. So knowledge increases your ignorance and purpose of knowledge is to be aware you are ignorant of lot of things. If knowledge gives you an idea – you know it all, then it is no Knowledge. That is real ignorance, real Ego. "I know it all".

330. Gurudev, you say that if 1% of the population meditates, it benefits the rest of the 99%. Can you please explain?

Sri Sri: The whole universe is just vibrations. You can see this. Suppose in a group, one-person gets agitated, see how it spreads to everybody. Everyone gets disturbed. In the same way, if one person is peaceful, that peace radiates.

331. Gurudev my mother and father don't have peace. How can I help them be friendly?

Sri Sri: This is a very big task my dear. You do one thing; ask them to do The Happiness Program. Individually convince them and I tell you, don't take it too seriously.

Sometimes they are happy fighting. If there is nothing then they will feel very empty. So never mind if they fight now and then.

You know, many kids are already keeping their parents together. It is because of the kids that the parents are staying together. It is happening more and more. So just your presence and your being there is putting them in their places. Don't worry.

332. If a relationship is not going smoothly, what to do?

Sri Sri: Well, I am not an expert to answer this. (Laughter)

One thing I can tell you is that you should leave a certain margin in a relationship. The strength of a relationship lies in the ability to accommodate rough patches. How well you handle it gives you skills. Otherwise how do you get to know how accommodating, understanding and considerate you are?

These virtues come up only when you have rough patches. See the situation as an opportunity on how to adapt, how to be accommodating, understanding and considerate. You should give a shot to excel in exhibiting your character rather than changing the other person.

333. Guruji, up to what extent should one sustain a relationship? How much can one bend?

Sri Sri: You can't bend too much if the other person is turning violent, taking advantage of you. Then you have to stand up and state clearly. Deal with all of this using your intellect and not your emotions.

Conflict is always emotional. Resolution is intellectual. Emotional conflict can't be dealt with emotions. Similarly an intellectual argument cannot be dealt with the intellect.

The emotional side of it has to be considered. If you observe carefully there is a stream of emotions behind an intellectual argument. Life is a fine balance between the emotions and the intellect. When to use what, is the real wisdom and how do you gain that wisdom? The answer is meditation, meditation and meditation.

334. We know we have to follow our heart but why is it difficult sometimes when our rational side is stronger, and we think it is correct whereas the emotion is weaker and sometimes more crazy. Thank you for sharing time with us.

Sri Sri: You know in work don't use your emotions - in work use your intellect. But with your family and friends don't use your intellect so much, use your emotions. If you mix it up, you are in trouble! You know, with your wife and children if you are relating them with your intellect and doing business with your emotion you had it! You know at home you have to be more with the value of heart. When you do service you do it with your heart, right? But when you're doing your work you don't have to be an emotional thing. Just use your rational mind.

335. Gurudev, if one is on the path for several years, and then suddenly a doubt comes about something after a long time, and the path does not appear very charming anymore, what should one do then?

Sri Sri: That is the time when you need to hold on to your faith. Moments of doubt are like clouds. The clouds do come, but they come and disappear. If you do not cooperate or engage with them, they will simply come and go.

If you shake hands with them and flow with them, then it will take a longer time to overcome them. Truth will always stand out and win in the end.

Doubts may come, and this is quite possible because of the company that we keep. Someone may tell you, 'Oh, you know, so-and-so person does so much meditation, still he became sick', etc.

What do they mean? They think that if someone who is doing Yoga and meditation fell sick, then what is the point of you doing all that?

It is not because of meditation that the person became sick. He must have done some other things which would have brought him this sickness. It could also be because of his Karma.

The theory of Karma is so deep and unfathomable that you cannot think of understanding it all in a linear manner. Someone may have lived a very good life but may face a lot of difficulties towards the end of their life.

Good action will always give only good results. A mango tree will only give mango fruits. It will not give you bitter Neem fruits. It is the law of Nature.

So when doubts come, let them step in and go away by themselves. You keep moving forward.

336. Guruji, I experience some intense vibrations especially when I am in bliss. Can you please talk about different levels of layers of energy in our body?

Sri Sri: This entire universe is nothing but vibrations. It is all made up of waves, vibrations, and energy. When your vibrations do not match with the vibrations of others you call it negative, and when your vibrations match with other vibrations, it is harmonious and you call it bliss. When your energy becomes such that it becomes universal, then whatever the outer circumstances may be, you remain oblivious to it.

We went to Machu Picchu in South America; in Peru, and the people asked me, 'How do you feel the vibrations here?' I said, 'I do not feel anything'; this is because wherever we go we create our own vibrations. So I do not say, 'Oh, this is negative and that is not'. Of course, when people are agitating, upset or sad, it definitely creates negative vibrations around you; no doubt. But remember that they are not as powerful as your positive vibrations. It may appear to you that they are overpowering, but in reality it is not so.

337. Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, then why was he born only with only 10 kalas when he could have been born with 16 kalas?

Sri Sri: Don't worry what Ram was born with, or not born with. All these great men have said some wonderful things, and the essence of it all is, honor nature, honor yourself and honor people around you. The essence of all the teachings in the world is love. Just Love!

Narada has said, 'Sa tva asmin parama prema rupa', unconditional love!

Sri Ram's love for the people, for dharma; his love for his brothers, and his ability to make everyone a part of him, that is what is most inspiring.

You know what Vishnu means? That which is in every atom of creation. One who is present in every atom, in every particle of the universe. Vishnu a conch, disc, flower and a gada (golden mace), it symbolizes the four elements. The sudarsan chakra (disc) symbolizes the fire element, conch symbolizes water element, flower symbolizes the air element, and then the gada symbolizes the earth element. Vishnu is depicted in blue color that is space element.

When you say Vishnu, it means that power that is present in all the five elements. This

world is called prapancha. Prapancha means permutations and combinations of five things. What are they? Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether, and everything here is an avatar, or born out of these five elements.

338. What is the relationship between Seeker, Guru and the Divine?

Sri Sri: The beginning, middle and end of a same line. It is the seed, the plant and the tree.

339. "The world is full of paradoxes and life is full of opposites. The art is to embrace the opposites, accommodate the paradoxes and live with a smile".

340. What is The Art of Living?

Sri Sri: It is just a simple skill; the ability to free your mind of the past, to free your mind of the future fears, and to be able to play with every situation that is in front of you.

341. Dearest Guruji, may I give you a big hug?

Sri Sri: Yes, but flying one!

342. Intellectual v/s Emotional

There are two types of people in the world:

One type is called Bhaav-pradhan: They are those who are driven purely by their feelings (meaning those who give great importance to their feelings).

The second type is called Gyaan-pradhan: They are those who are driven by fact and logic, and act on the basis of knowledge (meaning those who go by facts and knowledge and base their actions on reason and knowledge).

Some people's feelings are very strong, and they are very emotional about everything around them. On the other hand, some people are natural thinkers. They think, weigh the pros and cons of everything and then act in a particular situation. Both (feelings and knowledge) of these are very important aspects of a person's life, and both are necessary. If you only rely on your feelings and not knowledge, you soon get misled and get carried away by them. On the other hand, if you only think and act without any regard to your feelings, then your life loses enthusiasm and becomes so dry. There is no juice left in your life then.

So you have to nurture both the head (the seat of logic, intellect and knowledge) and the heart (the centre of feelings and emotions). You have to combine them together to move ahead in life. This is how you can bring fullness to your life.

343. Dear Gurudev, I tend to seek appreciation in whatever I do. How to get rid of this?

Sri Sri: You came to know about this, that itself is one step ahead. Now, make a determination that you don't care whether someone appreciates or not. 'Let me do what I need to do, and not worry about others'. That is it, and then you will gain the strength needed.

I have come here to remind you one thing. Do you know what? No, that is why I have come here to remind you of it (laughs).

You don't know why I have come here, right? I have come to remind you that there is one power that exists - God exists.

344. If you don't believe me then ask me. I'll say, God exists and He loves you a lot. Then you'll ask, 'why did He give me suffering? If God exists, then why is there misery?' When we go against him or become ungrateful, then sorrow increases. When we are troubled, then we will have to seek God. Then we come to know that in times of pain, there has been someone by my side.

It is said that God measures and then attaches the tail on each animal. He did not attach the tail of an elephant to a goat, because it will not be able to carry it. Every animal is assigned a tail as long as it can carry. Similarly, every person's problem is his tail. You face only those problems that you can handle. I have come to solve those problems that you cannot handle.

All the Gurus and intellectuals in the society are there primarily to solve your problems. The whole world, and your friends and relatives are there with you. You are not alone.

So, 'God is there, He exists'; I have come here just to remind you of this fact. God is there and He loves you a lot and He is in you.

345. How to deal with rude behavior?

Sri Sri: "What do you do when someone behaves very rudely to you?"

1. Get upset
2. React rudely back

3. Get frustrated
4. Run-away from and avoid the person or the situation
5. Blame the person
6. Preach to the person

None of these will in any way strengthen you.

Then what are the options? See rude behaviour in this light:

1. It indicates the intensity of their commitment
2. It indicates the amount of stress and insensitivity
3. It projects the up-bringing of the person
4. It indicates a behavioural pattern
5. It shows lack of knowledge
6. It shows lack of observation of one's own mind and its sensations
7. It shows your behaviour to avoid
8. It is an opportunity for you to welcome and absorb the rudeness
9. It strengthens your mind
10. It unconditions the love that you are

The next time when someone is rude to you, make sure you don't get upset. Just give back a broad smile.

If you can digest the rudeness, nothing whatsoever can shake you”.

346. Indigestion of Knowledge

Indigestion of knowledge leads to development of a false ego, which has no cure. Knowledge must be digested properly.

Indigestion of knowledge leads to:

- ❖ False ego
- ❖ Disinterestedness; taking for granted; lack of awareness
- ❖ Familiarity without understanding, without depth -- flakiness
- ❖ Tendency to preach
- ❖ "Heart" burn
- ❖ Using knowledge for their own small ends
- ❖ Adamancy
- ❖ Your inability to do something (break a habit) can cause a pinch; when you are deeply pained by something, then that will rid you of that habit. If you are pained by your shortcomings, then you are sadhak. Pain takes you out of addiction.

If you are in love with the divine, then you can digest the knowledge. Love is the appetizer

- seva is the exercise - without love and seva, knowledge becomes indigestible. So everyone list the loving seva you have done for the world.

Marielle: If love is the appetizer, what is the main course?

Guruji: Knowledge

Daniel: What is dessert?

Guruji: Myself! (Laughter)

347. Laugh and make others laugh, don't get entangled and don't entangle others.

348. Remember that the Divine loves you dearly. He is capable of removing any lack that you may have. Knowing this brings such joy in Life.

349. Gurudev, everything in the world is natural - the good and the bad. Then why are we always trying to convert the bad into good?

Sri Sri: Because that is also part of our nature. People are being born, and people die, then why do you need to save anybody from dying? Close down all the hospitals, shut down all the services. Anyways people die, what is the point? How does it matter if they die a little earlier or sometimes later? Sooner the better this type of logic doesn't hold good. Our nature is to help. Our nature is to bring light. Our nature is to bring comfort to others, and make everyone feel happy.

We can't be in anyway different from that. If you ask alum, 'Why do you clean the water?' It will say, 'It is in my nature'. If you ask Sun, 'Why do give light to people?' It will say, 'That is my nature'. If you ask a star, 'Why you twinkle in sky? It doesn't help anybody'. It will say, 'That it is in my nature, to twinkle'. So it is our nature to help others, and to bring comfort to life.

Every individual is in search of happiness. Even people, who are doing bad things, are doing it in search of happiness. It is just that they don't know that they won't get it. If they knew that they won't get happiness by doing bad things, they would never do it. They are doing all the wrong things simply because they do not know that they won't be able to get happiness out of it. So it is our job to make them aware, 'See, if you keep doing all these wrong things, you are only going to get more miserable. It is better that you do good things, and then you will be happy.'

350. Guru is a circuit breaker

A city without streets, a king without treasure, a merchant without business and a life without a guru are all considered the same. Why the emphasis on guru? Why do you need a guru?

Life sometimes seems very complicated. There is pleasure, pain, happiness, suffering, generosity, greed, passion and dispassion. When our life is full of such opposing values, our mind sometimes becomes unable to handle these complications and just breaks down.

It is then that you need wisdom to guide you through troubled times. Guru is that wisdom. You might have noticed you give great advice when you are not involved in a situation but the same is not true when you are in trouble. This is because wisdom dawns when you are out of the mess. Guru is one who is out of the mess. He watches the chaos, amidst the chaos.

Guru is like a circuit breaker. When you cannot handle life, your guru comes and saves so that you remain sane and balanced. If there is a compelling desire that bothers you, your guru is there to offer solace. You offer all your desires and pain to your guru. Having a guru means being able to relax and smile all the time, walk with confidence, be fearless and have a vision. That is wisdom.

Guru is a tattva -- an element, a quality inside you. It is not limited to a body or form. Guru comes in your life in spite of your refusing or being rebellious. The guru principle is so vital in life. There is an element of the guru in every human being. That wisdom in each has to be invoked awakened. When this element is awakened, misery in life disappears.

In our consciousness, wisdom comes to life when guru tattva comes to life. When we have no desires of our own, then the guru tattva dawns in our life. Wake up and see that our life is changing every moment and feel grateful for whatever you have received.

Guru Purnima is to review your growth. This review will give you encouragement. If you think you haven't grown enough on the spiritual path in the past few years, then you have not utilised the knowledge. If you feel you are stuck somewhere, then the realisation that you are stuck is also growth.

That is why we celebrate Guru Purnima. It is the day when the devotee arises in full gratitude and feels grateful for the great knowledge he has received from the Master. It is time to review how much knowledge you have ingrained in your life and how you are growing in knowledge. This may bring about a realisation for scope of improvement, which in turn will bring humility in you. Be grateful for the way this knowledge has transformed you. Just think how you could have been without this. Gratitude and humility together make bloom a genuine prayer inside you.

On Guru Purnima, remember all gurus of the past. When your life is full, you get a feeling of gratitude then you start with the guru and end up adoring everything in life. On Guru Purnima the devotee wakes up in full gratitude. The devotee becomes like an ocean moving in itself. Guru Purnima is a time to celebrate and rise in devotion and gratitude.

351. Gurudev, what is Pitru? And what is Pitru Loka?

Sri Sri: After leaving the physical body, the place where soul departs to is Pitru Loka.

These Lokas are present here only. It is like TV channels. If you change a channel on the television that does not mean the other channel disappears. It is still there, but you just can't see it.

Similarly, we can see only this dimension, but there are other dimensions also that are present here, which we cannot see.

The mind is like a television box, and the soul is where we have all the channels. This is so interesting.

You know, it is so mind-boggling, there are so many layers to this creation; one layer is of human life, another layer is of the departed souls, another layer is of the deities (everything happens from this layer). Then there is the layer of the Gandharva (the realm of music).

Any renowned musician you meet, they have a Gandharva soul attached to them. Like this, the creation has many layers.

352. Gurudev, if I do not do Sadhana, Seva and Satsang, are you still with me?

Sri Sri: Yes! However you are, I am always with you. But the real question is, will you always be with me?

See, if you do Sadhana then I am already with you, and you with me (referring to the union through the medium of Sadhana).

Now if you like me, and you want to be with me, you will do at least a little bit of Sadhana to be with me (through the medium of Sadhana).

Sit quiet for a little while every day, do some meditation.

353. Play of the Divine

Suppose you place your trust in someone and got betrayed. Then just remind yourself that it is all a play of the Divine. Think that God wanted to make you learn some important lesson, and so he came in this person's form to your life.

So just see the situation with this understanding.

Why am I saying this? See, in the end, it is all one consciousness, which assumes different forms and different ways to teach us something important in life. So have this understanding and just move ahead.

354. Guruji, I love a girl and want to marry her but she is Manglik. Should I marry?

Sri Sri: I would say if you both have faith in god and you think being together everything will be alright then no planet can affect you. God is above all. Chanting "Om Namah Shivaya" will make everything fall at your feet.

355. Gurudev, I am very troubled thinking about all the karmas of my past life. Please advice and guide me.

Sri Sri: Just know that the seeds of all such karmas of the past lives get burnt once you come here. So just relax and be happy.

Suppose you have a house that has been locked away for a 100 years. Now you will ask, 'O Gurudev, how can one remove the darkness of 100 years in just a day?'

I tell you, the moment the lamp of knowledge has been lit in your heart; all the darkness (of ignorance and negativity) vanishes away in an instant. In the same way, the seeds of all your past karmas burn away as you go deeper and deeper into Self-knowledge.

When you realize with awareness that 'I am not this body, I am the eternal spirit', any negative effects of your past karmas will simply disappear without affecting you.

356. How to free ourselves from the pain we have received till now and what to do so that we do not receive the pain in the future?

Sri Sri: Yoga and meditation is the only way. Here everything is painful. Even an overdose of anything pleasant becomes painful.

Wanting something pleasant causes pain, and while having also there is pain because there

is a fear of losing it and when it is gone, the memory of it gives pain.

Something unpleasant anyways gives pain right away. But the pleasant also gives pain because wanting or craving for something pleasant, is painful.

This is what happens many times. Someone wants to get into a ministerial post. Before getting into it, there is so much pain to get into the post. Once they get into the post, then maintaining it is painful and then when they leave the post, then also there is pain, because no one respects them. But when you feel completely unattached to it that is when the pain disappears.

That is why it is said, 'Tena tyak tena bhunji thah'. Know that all this belongs to the Divine, so just let go of attachment and enjoy!

I am not saying that it is bad to get into a position or bad to experience pleasantness, no! But you should be detached for that.

357. When should one stop engaging in the world and be free?

Sri Sri: While engaging in the world you should feel the freedom.

When you sit for meditation that is when you should completely disengage from the world and when you come back to activity, then you should have keen awareness. Develop that mindfulness and keen awareness.

358. How did Buddha attain enlightenment without doing sadhana, seva, or satsang?

Sri Sri: Who said that Buddha did not meditate? Meditation is sadhana and he also traveled to many places and served people. He listened to everyone's problems, and taught them meditation. Isn't this Seva?

Who said he didn't do satsang? Every day they would sit and do satsang. All the Buddhist scriptures are from these Satsangs only.

He is the one who said, 'Bhavatu sabba mangalam, rakkhantu sabba devata (May all beings be happy, and may all the Gods protect you).

In those days the language used was Pali, so whatever Buddha spoke and sang in Pali, is what has become the Buddhist scriptures today.

If you look at it that way, then you can say that Lord Krishna did so much. He recited the Bhagavad Gita.

In fact Bhagawan Buddha did a lot. He meditated a lot, he fasted a lot. Whatever anyone told him to do, he did. After doing so much, when finally he got very tired, that is when he got enlightenment.

Buddha did so much sadhana. Krishna did not do much sadhana. He was mischievous; he did something here, and he went and did something there. That is why it is called Krishna Leela (Play of Krishna), and Buddha Katha (Story of Buddha).

359. I have started listening to this spiritual leader since a year now. He is saying that enlightenment is just a pure physical and physiological function of the body, and there is no religious content in it. He is rejecting other schools of thought and saying that no system, or method will lead you enlightenment and there is no such thing as enlightenment at all. Gurudev, is there really anything as enlightenment?

Sri Sri: See; in this world, different people have different opinions and different views. They can have their views, but reality is different.

Somebody sitting in a desert might say, 'There are no trees on planet Earth'. That is their experience. On the other hand, we say, 'Oh! There are so many trees. There is plenty of water, and the water is so sweet'. But that is not their experience. The water they have tasted is salty.

People are entitled to have their own perceptions.

If we say that there is no enlightenment; first, enlightenment means what?

It means rising above the mind; becoming your natural Self. It is not something that just falls on your head.

'I am happy, come what may'.

If enlightenment is not there, then why have people from centuries spoken about it. It is not just one person's fantasy.

For centuries people have had the very same experience that 'I am not the body' and yes, you do not have to read and read, and then you will get an experience. So many people have not read anything, but when they do Sudardhan Kriya, they have the same experience, as someone who has read.

You should ask this person to come and do the Sudarshan Kriya and Shakti Kriya. Once he does Sudarshan Kriya, Shakti Kriya and some meditation, then he may understand.

I have heard a very famous person say, 'You cannot stop thoughts in the mind for even a

second. If thoughts stop, then you will become crazy'.

This is not our experience! Is this your experience? What is your experience when you meditate here? For an extended period of time, your mind become calm, settled and serene; is it so? (Everyone says, 'Yes')

You experience a mind without thoughts! (Everyone says, 'Yes')

Today, this can even be measured using instruments. When there is total harmony and synchrony between left and right hemisphere of the brain, and when the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system are working in harmony, then you say that this is an altered state of consciousness.

And this altered state of consciousness which can be physically measured today, is what is called enlightenment.

360. Without knowledge, there is suffering in love too. Despite knowledge, if there is suffering, then accept it. That is the nature of love.

361. Time and Sadness are Related

Time is one of the 24 principles that govern this creation. Time is not elsewhere; it is here, right now in this very moment. Every moment is important. Live every moment of life and make life a celebration.

The silent part of the Divine is known as Maha Kaala. Shiva is known as Mahakaal. Mahakaal means great time. We often say, "I had a great time". But, what does it mean? Great time means the moments present in the timeless moments.

Lord Shiva is also known as Kaala Samhaara Murti. (It means the lord who slays time). How is it possible to slay time? It is possible by extreme bliss. When you are blissful you will not feel the passage of time. When you are not aware of the passage of time, then it is said that time has been slayed.

There is a close relation between time and sadness. When you are very sad, you perceive time to be too long. When you are happy, you do not feel time pass.

Usually when the word God is mentioned everybody looks up immediately. What is there up above? There is nothing above. Everything is inside, neither above nor below. Looking inside or being inside is meditation and this brings real joy, real happiness.

When you look at someone close to you, your friend or somebody you love, what happens

to you? Something happens inside you. You feel as though some new energy is passing through you. Capture that great moment. It is those great moments, which are timeless moments.

You might have experienced those timeless moments by the presence of that person, that person might have brought forth those emotions in you. So what? Instead of getting immersed in that person or in the situation, just be with the spring of bliss rising up in you.

The Divine has given you all the small pleasures in the world, but has kept the bliss to Him. To get the bliss, you have to go to Him and Him alone. Be sincere in your attempts. Do not try to outsmart the Divine. Once you get the bliss, then everything else is joyful.

Give satsang and meditation your highest priority. Give prime time to the divine and know that God belongs to you. Either through awareness or through practice, you can reach the same spot. Divinity belongs to you. When you know you are part of the divine plan, you stop demanding. Then you know everything is being done for you.

You are taken care of. Usually we do it the other way: we hurry the mind and are slow in our action. Patience in the mind and dynamism in action is the right formula. Make your body God's abode and there will be peace and bliss. God is not an object of senses but the feeling of feelings, the presence of presence, the sound of silence, the essence of the world and a taste of bliss!

362. Gurudev, how can we feel that we have become connected to you?

Sri Sri: This is very simple, why do you doubt it? Do you know why? It is because you are already aware that the connection has been established. If you did not have any connection with me, then these questions would never arise.

The fact that you asked this question means that the connection is there. That's it! Just take it for granted that the connection is there and it is very strong. Do not get misled by silly thoughts like, 'Oh, Gurudev looked at him but not at me', or 'Gurudev smiled at her but not at me'. Do not think like this at all.

How do you experience your connection with the air, or the space around you? What is there to experience? I tell you just relax and repose in yourself, and then everything is yours.

363. Just like a rainbow, where all the colors merge to form a single white light, the Paramatma (Supreme Consciousness) is white and all the forms of Gods are the various colors.

364. Ways to Achieve Inner Peace

Each new year, people wish each other happiness, prosperity and peace, but only a few seem to know how to be peaceful -- like only a few know how to make money. Here are some steps that might help one to find the most needed inner peace.

1. Take Time for Yourself

Often, we become so engrossed in our day-to-day activities, we simply end up gathering more and more information, and do not take time out to think and reflect. Then we feel dull and tired.

A few quiet moments everyday are the source of creativity. Silence heals and rejuvenates and gives you depth and stability. Sometime during the day, sit for a few minutes; get into the cave of your heart, eyes closed, and keep the world away.

Taking some time for yourself improves the quality of your life.

2. Know the Impermanence of Life

See the impermanence in this life. Millions of years have passed and millions more will come. Nothing is permanent. In this broad, universal context, what is your life? It is not even a drop in the ocean.

Just open your eyes, and ask, "Who am I? Why am I on this planet? What is my lifetime?"

An awareness dawns, and you will stop worrying about little things. All smallness will simply drop and you will be able to live every moment of your life. When you review your life in a broader context, the quality of your life improves.

3. Perform Random Act of Kindness

Make a commitment to make this world a better place to live. Do some acts of kindness without expecting anything in return. Service alone can bring contentment in life. It creates a sense of connectedness. When you bring some relief to someone through selfless service, good vibrations come to you. When you show kindness, your true nature, which is love and peace, come to the surface.

4. Make Your Smile Cheaper

Every day, every morning, look at the mirror and give a good smile to yourself. Don't let your smile be snatched away by anybody! Usually, you give your anger freely and smile rarely, as though a smile is costly. Make your smile cheaper and anger expensive!

5. Make Meditation a Part of Your Life

When we have higher goals in life it leads to stress and restlessness, which can be released through a few minutes of meditation and introspection. Meditation gives you deep rest. The deeper you are able to rest, the more dynamic you will be in activity.

What is meditation?

- Mind without agitation is meditation.
- Mind in the present moment is meditation.
- Mind that has no hesitation, no anticipation is meditation.
- Mind that comes back home to the source, which is peace and joy, is meditation.

6. Be a Student Always

Know that you are a student forever. Do not underestimate anybody. Knowledge may come to you from any corner. Each occasion teaches you and each person teaches you. The world is your teacher. When you are always looking to learn, you will stop underestimating others. Humility will dawn in your life.

7. Feel Grateful

Our love, faith and belief should be deep-rooted, and then everything else moves on its own. The feeling that "I am blessed" can help you overcome any failure. Once you realize that you are blessed, then all the complaints and grumbling disappear, all the insecurities disappear and you become grateful, contented and peaceful.

365. If God is in everybody then why does one person kill another?

Sri Sri: It is because God is sleeping in some people. There are two steps to awakening. First form inertia humanness is awakened. Then from humanness, Divinity is awakened. First with Seva you awaken the humanness and then with Sadhana you awaken the Divinity.

366. I am the Valentine of the whole world and I reside in every heart. If you are my Valentine you will see me everywhere.

367. Gurudev can you tell us what the soul is? What is said about it in brief in The Yoga Vasishtha?

Sri Sri: It is impossible to say in a few lines about the Yoga Vasishtha, but Sage Vasishtha at

one point described the soul saying - The soul is as empty as the sky and as full as the ocean!

368. Gurudev, I want to know your opinion about India. How according to you should India be?

Sri Sri: India, in my vision, is where people from all religion and communities come together for their country. India has been divided by religions and communities.

I want to see a slum free India. All slums should be removed. I want to see a corruption free, violence free, misconduct free India, hatred free India; where the youth are calm, farmers are happy, and businessmen trade outside the country too.

India was once like that. Those days cell phones and such things were not there. India's fame was known all around.

Columbus set out to look for India and he discovered America instead. See how India's fame had reached all around the world.

When British left India they carried with themselves 900 ships full of gold. That was India, which was so prosperous that its prosperity never diminished. See where we are today. That time we were spiritual and religious too.

Lord Macaulay, when he went to London, he wrote to Queen Elizabeth, saying, 'I have traveled the length and breadth of India, and I have not see one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage'.

369. I feel that prayers do not come from my heart. What to do to pray from the heart?

Sri Sri: Nothing. Do not do anything about it. Just be natural. You cannot force yourself to like anything or to have love and devotion. The more effort you make, the longer it takes. Be clear about two things. First, never doubt someone's love for you or your love for someone else. Second, don't make an effort to love or insist that someone should love you. These are impediments on the path of love.

370. Whatever happened, don't sit and brood over it. Each moment is the start of a new life. Whatever happened, had to happen, don't sit and think I could have done this or that, it is of no use. Leave your burden, clear the mind, and move on.

371. Guruji, a few days ago in Satsang you said we should see divinity in Parashuram also. Does this mean that we should see divinity in Osama Bin Laden also?

Sri Sri: Once Adi Shakarcharya was travelling somewhere and a mad elephant started running after him. He also ran to and entered a nearby hut to save himself. Someone then asked him - You say everything is Maaya or illusion and everything is God, then why did you run to save yourself? Adi Shankaracharya replied - Just like running of the elephant was Maya, similarly my running away to save myself is also Maaya. God inside him said to run – god inside me asked me to save myself. This is wisdom. Understand the difference between Advaita Gyan (Spiritual Knowledge) and Vyawahaar Satya (Practical Reality).

If you mix both then you will always be in confusion. Aadhyatam Gyan - seeing unity in everything should be applied during Saadhna. In the sphere of Vyawahaar, honour the diversity. Like when you want to light a fire, table chair and door – everything is wood, but when you want to sit you can sit only on a chair. A chair cannot do the work of the door and the door cannot do the work of a chair, But everything is still wood. The Gold remains Gold even if you mould it into bangles or earrings – this is spirituality, but you cannot wear a bangle in the ear or earring in the hand – this is practical application.

372. Gurudev is it okay, if youngsters become full time teacher leaving behind all responsibilities?

Sri Sri: I usually don't encourage them easily. I ask them first get permission of parents and then come. It is actually a different case to case. Few whose parents already into business and want their children to also do business can continue doing so but those who are struggling with small jobs and are not satisfied I would say come and travel around the world and be full time teacher and I tell you becoming full time teacher is not a difficult thing. You need not to shave your head and eat onetime meal to become full time teacher (laugh). It's actually a good and respectable job than any other (claps).

373. Is it possible for a simple person to walk on the spiritual path?

Sri Sri: Absolutely possible, this is path for simple people. It is in fact difficult for special people!

374. Why do people with high knowledge keep long hair and beard?

Sri Sri: It s just a uniform that's all! Either you take everything off or you keep everything.

375. What is the purpose of my life?

Sri Sri: That's good to keep wondering about it. But I would like you to make a list of what is not the purpose of life. It is not just living like a robot, eating, sleeping, and watching television. This is not the purpose of life.

"How many of you are coming for the first time? Make those who are coming here for the first time, comfortable and those who are coming here for the first time, feel comfortable. You are not a guest here. This is your home, you have come back home".



JAI GURUDEV